Bengaluru Sunday, June 14, 2026 Pages 24 Vol 79 No 164 ₹8

DH on Sunday

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DECCAN HERALD
The Power of Good

Gill powers India to win over Afghanistan

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Big Picture

Genes before vows

Premarital genetic screening is gaining popularity among urban couples, and conversations once confined to family history and horoscopes are now expanding to include inherited disease and reproductive risks

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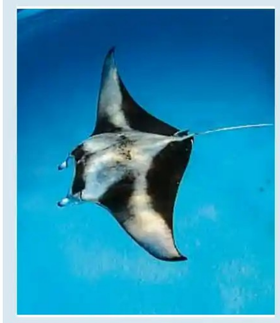

Magical experience
Make your trip to the Maldives memorable by swimming with manta rays at Hanifaru Bay

Books
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Beyond the headlines
The first Taiwanese novel to win the International Booker, this is a richly textured exploration of identity

Quickly

5 killed in IAF transport plane crash in Assam
An Indian Air Force AN-32 transport aircraft crashed on Saturday at Air Force Station Jorhat in Assam killing five personnel on-board. The co-pilot of the aircraft is the only survivor and is undergoing treatment for injuries at a military hospital in Jorhat, sources said.
Details on Page 3

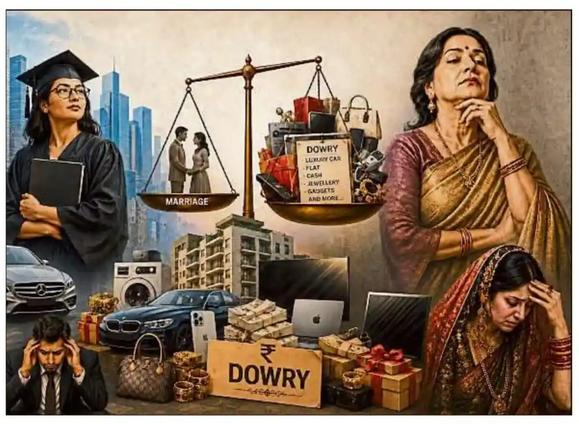
US justifies attacks on ships in Hormuz
Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Donald Trump will meet in France on Wednesday, but a new irritant has emerged in the bilateral relations as Washington brushed aside New Delhi's protest over the United States Navy's attacks on merchant vessels in the Gulf of Oman, and avoided expressing any regret over the killing of three mariners from India.
Details on Page 3

SIT to probe Ayodhya fund charges
The Uttar Pradesh government on Saturday formed a special Investigation team (SIT) to probe the alleged embezzlement of crores of rupees in offerings at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. The allegations had triggered a political row. The three-member probe team would submit an interim report within a week and a final report in a fortnight, according to official sources here.
Details on Page 11

Rahul's student conventions from June 17
Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi will conduct four student conventions in the next month, starting June 17 from Kota, the country's entrance coaching hub, as part of Congress's nationwide campaign against the Modi government over "systematic betrayal" of the youth. The party will also seek a "comprehensive" debate in Parliament on the crisis confronting India's youth and advocate legislative measures.
Details on Page 10

Education, empowerment fail to weaken dowry grip

Despite legal safeguards and rising literacy, dowry persists due to entrenched social norms, consumerism and weak enforcement



AI GENERATED IMAGE

NABAMITA MITRA
BENGALURU, DHNS

The recent death of Twisha Sharma, a 33-year-old model and MBA graduate who was found dead at her marital home in Bhopal, challenges the conventional image of a dowry victim. Like several other victims in recent years, Twisha was educated, professionally accomplished and financially independent. Yet, these factors seem to have offered little protection against dowry-related abuse.

The case underscores a broader shift in the profile of victims. Dowry violence today cuts across class, education and income levels. It is no longer merely a manifestation of economic vulnerability. Despite legal safeguards, rising literacy levels and growing female participation in higher education and the workforce, dowry-related violence remains deeply embedded in society.

INSIGHT

"This is because the practice has become a part of our social psyche," said Sunita Thakur, legal adviser at Delhi-based Jagori, an organisation working on women's empowerment.

In 2024, India recorded 5,737 dowry deaths, nearly 16 women every day. Uttar Pradesh accounted for the highest number of deaths at 2,038, while Karnataka reported 112 cases.

In recent years, dowry practices have also taken more subtle forms shaped by rising consumerism and dual-income households.

The demands are no longer always explicit. "We have come across cases where the groom's family members say they do not want anything, only a working woman as the bride. In some cases, working women have had to part with their entire salary and ask for pocket money from their in-laws. Is it not dowry? The tactic is only changing," said Sunita.

According to Meenakshi Bali, Karnataka state president of the Akhila Bharatha Janawadi Mahila Sanghatane, the practice is largely driven by market forces. She said that the Dowry Prohibition Act has repeatedly been violated by both brides' and grooms' families, as giving dowry is considered as much an offence as demanding it.

"Unfortunately, there is little change in the situation, except that more people are now willing to complain," said Kerala State Women's Commission chairperson P Satheedevi.

Despite improved reporting, cases continue to reflect the severity of dowry-related violence.

One such case is that of Deepika Nagar, 25, in GautamBuddha Nagar. On the day of her death, her father received a distress call from her, saying physical assault by her husband, father-in-law and other relatives. Married into the Nagar family just 18 months earlier, she had reportedly been subjected to escalating demands. On the evening of the incident, her father decided to make his way to her house to try to settle the dispute. Hours later, at around 12.30 am, the family was informed that she had fallen from the terrace.

The postmortem, however, told a different story. Doctors found nine injuries that are consistent with severe, repeated blunt trauma. Her family says she was killed, then thrown from the terrace above the second floor. Police have registered cases against seven members of the marital family and have arrested her husband and his parents. The National Commission for Women has taken suo motu cognisance and sought a report from the Uttar Pradesh police. ACP Sumit Shukla, the investigating officer in the case, said that while investigation is on, arrests have been made and the police are doing their job, one must not forget that it is a "social" crime.

▸ Dowry deaths, Page 2

India's growing export credibility gap

GYANENDRA KESHRI

Nepal recently imposed restrictions on the import of Indian mangoes, citing concerns over high-risk pests. Imports are now permitted subject to prescribed phytosanitary requirements.

This comes close on the heels of Japan's suspension of Indian mango imports. Japan has long been a key market for premium Indian varieties such as Alphonso, Kesar, Langra and Banganapalli. The restrictions, announced at the start of the current export season, were attributed to deficiencies in fumigation and disinfection procedures at Vapour Heat Treatment (VHT) facilities used for mango exports.

The suspension has been imposed for an indefinite period. Japan had previously banned Indian mango imports in 1986 over similar concerns. The ban remained in place for two decades before being lifted in 2006. Since then, Indian mangoes have been exported to Japan for nearly 20 years without any major disruptions.

Reacting to the Nepalese authorities' decision, the Indian government said it would take up the matter through appropriate bilateral channels in accordance with the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and the framework of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

Japan's recent mango import ban and Nepal's latest restrictions have raised concerns over India's export quality and global reputation.

The **SUNDAY STORY**

"While Nepal has recently revised certain import conditions, including the requirement for Hot Water Treatment (HWT), India continues to facilitate exports in compliance with the prescribed requirements. At the same time, India has conveyed its concerns regarding the introduction of new phytosanitary measures without prior consultation," the Union Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare said in a statement.

While Nepal and Japan account for only a small share of India's overall mango exports, the developments are a setback to the country's reputation in international markets.

Mangoes are not an isolated case. Indian exports, particularly food products, dietary supplements and pharmaceuticals, have frequently faced restrictions, rejections and heightened scrutiny in overseas markets for quality controls.

The United States rejected over 25,000 Indian consignments in the past decade, as per the US Food and Drug Administration data. The number of Indian shipments refused by the US Food and Drug Administration surged to 5,737 in 2025 from an average of around 2,000 annually between 2017 and 2023.

Indian seafood exports have faced restrictions in European markets for several years. After nearly a decade of curbs, the 27-nation bloc European Union reopened its market to Indian seafood products last year.

▸ Indian exports, Page 2

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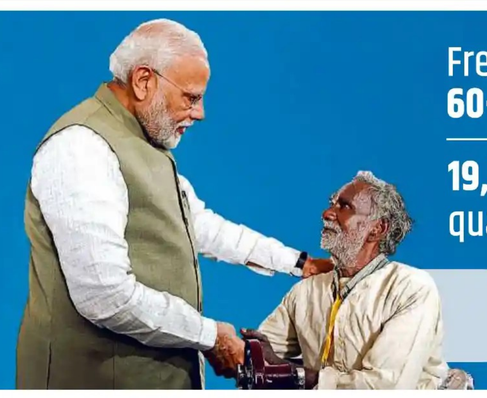
Healthy India, Strong India



Free treatment up to ₹5 lakh for senior citizens aged 70+,
60+ crore people covered under Ayushman Bharat

19,000+ Jan Aushadhi Kendras across the country providing quality medicines at up to 90% lower prices

12 Saal Vishwas ke, Vikas ke, Jan-kalyan ke

Government of Bharat

CBC 17101/13/0010/2627

Marriage lost in materialism

Dowry deaths, from P1

Despite these post-facto measures, it is important to note that Deepika was 25. She had called for help, but no one reached her in time.

In 2025, police arrested surgeon Dr Mahendra Reddy on charges of murdering his dermatologist wife, Dr Kruthika Reddy. The trial is yet to begin.

"It cuts across all sections of society... a society that truly values women cannot place a price on marriage and that the fight against dowry is not merely a legal battle, it is a moral imperative," said K Thulasi, an advocate practising at the Madras High Court.

The concern is reinforced by findings from field studies and post-mortem analyses.

An *Autopsy-Based Study of Socio-Etiological Aspects in Dowry Death Cases*, which examined 100 autopsy cases at Guntur Medical College in Andhra Pradesh a few years ago highlighted the social and circumstantial factors driving dowry-related deaths in the region.

Researchers noted that no age group was immune to dowry-related harassment, which in these cases ultimately proved fatal. Timing within the marriage also emerged as a critical risk factor. Nearly three in four victims died within the first three years of marital life. A majority of deaths (57%) occurred in nuclear families, where isolation and the absence of a mediating presence appeared to heighten risk.

'Adjust', the death knell

Most of the experts whom *DH* spoke to say that the change must come from the woman's family. A senior executive, who headed the 181 Women Helpline in Tamil Nadu for two years, said the root cause of dowry deaths is the perception of women as the "honour" of the family.

"Women are conditioned from childhood to adjust. Even when they report harassment to their parents, the first response is often to ask them to somehow accommodate it. Women are seen as the honour of the family and that mindset often makes parents overlook the suffering of their daughters," the senior executive said.

Such pressure is especially strong in middle- and upper-middle-class households, where women often receive little support from their parents and their distress calls go unheard. According to Sunita, intervention must come while the woman is still alive, and parents should not wait for a tragedy to unfold.

"To say 'please adjust' has become a metaphor for accepting whatever is meted out to you. And this continues to be widely accepted. The underlying mindset is that a woman or daughter should not return from her in-laws' home," said historian and filmmaker Uma Chakravarti.

While it is often difficult for women from economically weaker backgrounds to escape dowry-related harassment, women from well-off families too may remain silent, as fear of social stigma and concerns about family reputation can act as deterrents to speaking out.

Sunita believes that the parents of women stuck in this morass or faced tragedy must also be investigated for not acting on the complaints of their daughters. "While daughters now have a right on paternal property, the problem is that parents don't consider them as their own. Unless this changes, nothing much can be done," she added.

Role of police and law

The first anti-dowry law in the country was enacted in 1961 and has since undergone several amendments to strengthen its provisions. Over the years, national data suggests that the number of dowry deaths may have declined, but the practice itself remains deeply entrenched and has not been eradicated.

There are several factors behind this, beyond societal practice itself. Sandhya Raju, founder and managing director of the Kochi-based Centre for Constitutional Rights Research and Advocacy, said a key challenge is the lack of proof of dowry. In most cases, there is no signed agreement or photographic evidence to establish that such transactions have taken place.

Another reason is that when domestic violence begins, many women avoid filing complaints in the initial stages. Even when a complaint is lodged, experts say investigations are often handled casually, or both parties and the police opt for "mediation."

"In many cases, police do not lodge an FIR because they take for granted that there will be mediation. This practice stems from incidents where when cases went to the court, and women themselves desired to settle the case through mediation to 'save their family'," said Sunita.

Referring to a legal loophole, she said Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code is used in dowry-related cases, but police sometimes invoke it for domestic cruelty and treat cases as dowry harassment even when women do not specifically mention it. Section 498A (now Section 85 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita) was introduced in 1983 in response to a sharp rise in dowry-related domestic violence.

However, there have been criticisms that the provision has been misused in some cases to harass in-laws' families. Following this, the Supreme Court directed in 2024 that vague allegations should be scrutinised and not mechanically registered under the section. This development has also affected genuine cases in which women were victims but were unable to produce evidence against their tormentors.

"It is often police officers and lawyers who, at times, interpret and apply the law based on their own perspectives. Yes, there are exceptions, but they cannot represent the entire community," said Sunita.

Justice seekers often lose hope owing to the sluggish judicial system. For instance, in the case of Satya Rani Chadha, renowned activist who started the anti-dowry movement in India in the 1980s after losing her daughter, her son-in-law was convicted in 2013—34 years after the death.

For a bereaved family, the wait is akin to trauma. Cases of dowry deaths need to be fast-tracked to give hope to families who have lost their daughters.

Hoping for a change

Rising consumerism, coupled with the show of opulence at weddings, often clouds judgement and reduces the social significance of marriage. "Marriage has taken the form of business, encouraging a consumerist culture through lavish weddings. This has dealt a severe blow to middle-class and lower-middle-class families," said K Neela, secretary of the Prajna Legal Advisory Committee in Karnataka.

Last year, the Vaishnavi Hagawane case in Maharashtra drew widespread attention as it involved an affluent family and a lavish wedding. The incident prompted introspection within Maharashtra's influential Maratha community. Several organisations, including Sakal Maratha Samaj and the Akhil Bharatiy Maratha Mahasangh, launched campaigns against extravagant weddings and dowry practices.

Community leaders urged families to limit wedding guest lists, avoid expensive gifts, and shun displays of wealth such as luxury vehicles, DJs and fireworks, calling instead for marriage to be treated as a social institution rather than a status symbol.

"A course correction must come," said Uma.

And that must come from multiple channels, not just legal institutions. While police must treat every dowry case with utmost seriousness and work towards securing convictions by filing watertight chargesheets, parents also have a responsibility to empower their daughters by making them aware of their rights and the law, and to educate their sons about the evils of dowry. More importantly, they should support their daughters rather than asking them to "adjust".

The conversation should begin at home.

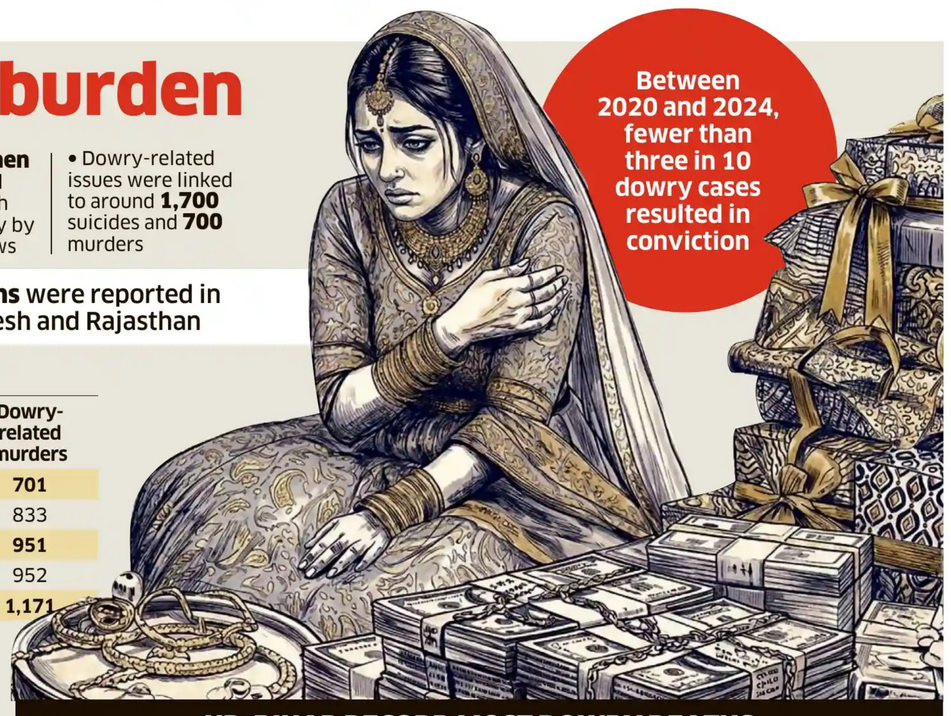
As a first step, parents of every woman should accept their daughters as economic and social assets rather than liabilities, and refuse to normalise or accommodate any form of dowry-related pressure or violence.

(With inputs from Amrita Madhukalya in New Delhi, Arjun Raghunath in Thiruvananthapuram, ETB Sivapriyan in Chennai, Mrityunjay Bose in Mumbai, SNV Sudhir in Hyderabad and Vittal Shastri in Kalaburagi)

A persistent burden

- India reported **5,737** dowry deaths in 2024, an average of nearly 16 women dying each day
- Around **12,000 women** reported dowry-related offences, nearly 1.2 lakh women reported cruelty by their husbands or in-laws
- Dowry-related issues were linked to around **1,700** suicides and **700** murders

Nearly **seven** out of **10 dowry deaths** were reported in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan

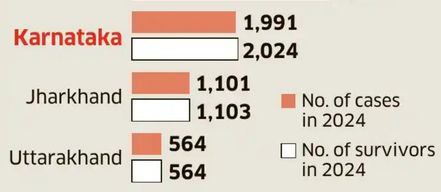


Between 2020 and 2024, fewer than three in 10 dowry cases resulted in conviction

The deadly toll of dowry

Year	Number of dowry deaths	Cases registered under The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961	Dowry-related murders
2024	**5,737**	**12,343**	**701**
2023	6,156	15,489	833
2022	**6,450**	**13,479**	**951**
2021	6,753	13,568	952
2020	**6,966**	**10,366**	**1,171**

Karnataka third in dowry harassment complaints



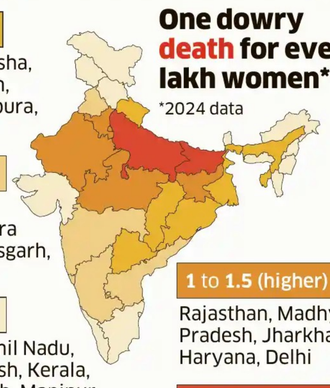
UP, BIHAR RECORD MOST DOWRY DEATHS

Uttar Pradesh	Bihar	Madhya Pradesh	Rajasthan	West Bengal	Jharkhand
2,038	1,078	450	386	337	206
Odisha	**Haryana**	**Telangana**	**Maharashtra**	**Karnataka**	**Delhi**
200	177	144	143	112	109

Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and the UTs of Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Puducherry, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands reported zero dowry deaths

One dowry death for every lakh women*

*2024 data



0.5 to 0.9 (high)
West Bengal, Odisha, Telangana, Assam, Uttarakhand, Tripura, Chandigarh

0.2 to 0.4 (low)
Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Goa

0 to 0.2 (lowest)
Gujarat, J&K, Tamil Nadu, Arunachal Pradesh, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Ladakh, Puducherry

1 to 1.5 (higher)
Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Haryana, Delhi

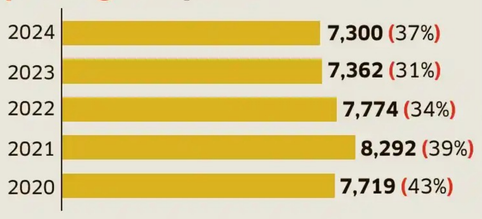
>1.5 (highest)
Uttar Pradesh, Bihar

Telangana tops south in dowry death cases

- **Uttar Pradesh, Bihar** recorded the highest dowry death rates in 2024
- Telangana recorded **144 dowry deaths** in the South, followed by Karnataka (112) and Andhra Pradesh (72)
- **Uttarakhand** reported the highest rate of dowry cases, followed by Bihar, Karnataka, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh
- Delhi, Ghaziabad, Indore, Jaipur, Kanpur, Lucknow and Patna recorded the highest rates of **dowry harassment** cases among India's metros and Tier-I cities

One in three cases still pending with police

Pending cases
( ) Pendency



Conviction rates in dowry cases below 30%

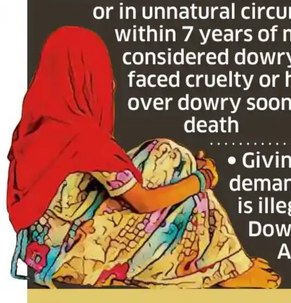
(Figures in %)

Beyond legislation: Why does dowry continue?

- Social norms continue to sustain and legitimise dowry practices
- Consumerism and social status pressures continue to drive dowry demands
- Stigma, family pressure and fear of social backlash deter reporting of dowry harassment
- Persistent social attitudes view women as financial burdens, reinforcing expectations of dowry
- Police indifference and poor documentation at the FIR stage weaken cases
- Dowry-related abuse often occurs behind closed doors, leaving little evidence or few witnesses
- Prolonged legal battles drain victims and their families emotionally and financially, discouraging them from pursuing justice

What is dowry?

- Any cash, property, jewellery or other valuables given as a condition of marriage are considered dowry
- Dowry-related harassment is punishable under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act
- A woman's death by burns, injury, or in unnatural circumstances within 7 years of marriage is considered dowry death if she faced cruelty or harassment over dowry soon before her death
- Giving, taking or demanding dowry is illegal under the Dowry Prohibition Act



Dowry roots

The word dowry has its origin in the **Anglo-French dowarie**, which means 'money, goods, or estate which a woman brings to her husband in marriage'. In early Indian society, the custom was to send gifts to a newly-wed couple who were beginning a new journey of life.

Source: NCRB, Law Drishti, SocialWork Institute, media reports, PIB

COMPILED BY **DIVYASHRI MUDAKAVI**
DH GRAPHIC: **GURU PRASATH R**

The new face of dowry violence

RANJANA KUMARI

For decades, public discourse on dowry violence in India has followed a familiar narrative. The typical victim was portrayed as a young woman from a lower-income or lower-middle-class family, financially dependent on her husband, with limited education and trapped in a patriarchal marriage with few avenues for escape. In response, the feminist movement advocated girls' education, economic independence, stronger legal protections and greater decision-making power for women.

The assumption was simple: when women become educated, financially independent and empowered, they will be less vulnerable to dowry-related abuse. Yet recent cases are forcing us to confront a deeply unsettling reality. The profile of dowry victims is changing. Today, many victims are highly educated, professionally successful and financially independent urban women from affluent and upper-middle-class families. They are precisely the women whom society considers capable of taking care of themselves. And yet, they are becoming victims of dowry harassment, domestic violence, coercive control, and, in some cases, death.

The question is obvious: if education, employment and economic security do not protect women, what exactly is driving this violence?

Marriage has increasingly become a marketplace where social prestige is measured through visible consumption. Luxury weddings, designer clothing, expensive jewellery and gifts have become symbols of status. The wedding industry actively promotes these aspirations.

The result is that dowry has adapted to a modern consumer culture rather than disappearing.

India's wedding economy is among the largest in the world. Families often spend years accumulating savings for a daughter's marriage. In many communities, marriage negotiations now increasingly resemble commercial transactions, where educational qualifications, foreign citizenship, salary packages and social status influence expectations.

The rise of international marriages has added another layer to this problem. While many such marriages are successful, numerous women face abandonment, financial exploitation, emotional abuse and coercive dowry demands after relocation. Some are isolated from support systems, denied legal rights, or pressured into silence because returning home is perceived as a familial failure.

For decades, women's movements advocated education because it creates opportunities, confidence and economic independence. However, education has not dismantled patriarchal power structures as quickly as many had hoped. Economic independence often enhances a woman's value in the marriage market, but it does not necessarily translate into greater bargaining power within marriage.

The social stigma surrounding divorce also remains powerful across class lines. Many women continue to be encouraged to "adjust," and avoid bringing shame to the family. Parents who have invested emotionally, socially and financially in an expensive wedding may be reluctant to acknowledge that the marriage has become abusive. As a result, warning signs are often ignored until it is too late.

According to the latest NCRB data, India recorded 5,737 dowry deaths in 2024. Behind each of these deaths lie thousands of women facing emotional abuse, threats, coercive financial demands, social isolation and psychological trauma.

Rethinking the solution

The changing profile of dowry victims teaches us an important lesson: education, employment and wealth are not enough. What must change is the underlying culture that continues to view marriage as a transaction and women as negotiable assets. We need a fundamental shift in how families approach marriage.

Parents must stop treating marriage as a project that must succeed at any cost. Communities must stop normalising "gifts" that are, in effect, disguised dowry. Institutions must respond more quickly to complaints of marital harassment. And women must have accessible and dignified pathways out of abusive marriages without fear of stigma.

The tragedy of contemporary dowry violence is that even the strongest and accomplished women remain vulnerable when society continues to value marriage more than their safety.

It is a crisis rooted in entitlement, status, greed and deeply entrenched patriarchal power. Until we confront those realities, the profile of victims may change, but the violence will continue.

(The author is Director, Centre for Social Research and Author, Brides Are Not for Burning)

Indian exports, from P1

Certifiers escape scrutiny after quality failures

The move came at a crucial time, as the United States, the largest importer of Indian seafood, had imposed steep tariffs of more than 50%, creating significant trade barriers. These episodes underscore the growing importance of robust quality assurance and certification systems in sustaining India's export competitiveness.

Layers of certification

There has been an over three-fold increase in the number of testing facilities by the Export Inspection Council of India (EIC) in the past decade. The number of EIC-accredited labs increased to 78 in 2024-25 from 21 in 2013-14. The EIC claims that its certification system is recognised by major international regulatory bodies, including that of the European Union, USA, Australia, Turkey, Korea and Japan.

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) is responsible for formulating Indian standards and managing product certification schemes while the EIC oversees export quality control, notifies commodities subject to pre-shipment inspection, and certifies their compliance. The Quality Council of India (QCI) runs accreditation boards for testing labs and certification bodies.

India's export testing and certification ecosystem is marked not by a shortage of agencies, but by fragmentation and duplication, which can impede rather than streamline shipments.

"India's export quality assurance framework is anchored by robust, world-class regulatory and standards-setting bodies," said S C Ralhan, President, Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO).

However, Ralhan also underlined the need for transitioning towards a unified system.

"While the framework has built a strong foundation, transitioning toward a unified, single-window clearance mechanism will completely eliminate overlapping requirements, drastically reducing time-to-market and unlocking a massive competitive edge for Indian exporters," he said.

Ralhan claimed that the FIEO has been pushing for the "test once, certify once, accepted everywhere" philosophy. "Transitioning to risk-based compliance, digital documentation and robust Mutual Recognition Agreements will turn India's regulatory framework into a lean, mean, export-facilitating engine," he added.

"Wherever there is a testing demand, it should be seamless and without any manual interventions," said Pankaj Chadha, Chairman, Engineering Export Promotion Council of India.

India has 17 export promotion councils. There is a dedicated promotion council for almost all the major sectors. Apart from these, there are also several bodies mandated to promote Indian exports.

Each certificate involves fees, documentation requirements, sample testing, transportation costs and delays. Exporters often complain that obtaining approvals can take days or even weeks, particularly when multiple agencies are involved.

These costs are ultimately passed on to buyers through higher prices, reducing the competitiveness of Indian products in international markets. Micro, small and medium enterprises are the most vulnerable. A single rejected consignment can threaten the viability of a small exporter. Such rejections often lead to demurrage charges, return freight costs and, at times, product destruction.

"Once a shipment fails the test, it is either destroyed there or you have the option to take it to some other ports, but you can't take it back to India," said Viren Marwaha, Director – sales and marketing at DRRK Foods, which exports rice. Marwaha said testing and certification for rice takes typically around 10 days.

Last month, Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said India aims to raise its combined exports of goods and services to $1 trillion in the current financial year and double that figure to $2 trillion over the next five years.

India's overall exports stood at $863.11 billion in 2025-26. This included $441.78 billion worth of merchandise exports and $421.32 billion services exports. Despite a marginal year-on-year increase, goods exports in 2025-26 were lower than $451 billion recorded in 2022-23.

Ambitious target

To reach the $1 trillion mark, India's overall exports would need to grow by about 16–17% this year over the previous year. This is an ambitious target given export trends over the past five years and the persistence of geopolitical uncertainties. Goyal's optimism is rooted in the expected implementation of a series of free trade agreements with advanced economies.

International trade increasingly operates on reputation-based trust. Countries such as New Zealand, Australia and several European nations have gradually moved towards systems in which regulatory oversight remains in place, but market credibility and third-party certification play a larger role. In these ecosystems, certification bodies compete on reputation; failure to uphold standards can result in a loss of both business and credibility.

India's model, by contrast, remains heavily reliant on government-linked certification structures. The challenge is not a lack of regulation, but limited accountability. When quality lapses occur, the institutions that certified the shipment rarely face direct consequences. Government agencies should focus on setting standards, monitoring compliance and enforcing penalties for violations, rather than carrying out multiple layers of inspection themselves. It would align India more closely with global best practices, where credibility is driven by transparent accreditation and competitive certification systems rather than administrative controls. Such reforms will be critical to achieving India's ambitious trillion-dollar export goals.

5 killed in IAF transport plane crash in Assam

Aircraft loses control on landing; co-pilot lone survivor

KALYAN RAY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

An Indian Air Force AN-32 transport aircraft crashed on Saturday at Air Force Station Jorhat in Assam killing five personnel on-board.

The co-pilot of the aircraft is the only survivor and is undergoing treatment for injuries at a military hospital in Jorhat, sources said. A court of inquiry has been constituted to ascertain the cause of the accident.

The deceased personnel have been identified as Squadron Leader Prashant Singh, Flight Lieutenant Shubham Kumar, Sergeant Jitendra Sharma, Agniveervayu Khemaram Kumawat and Agniveervayu Danish Alam. The aircraft met with the accident during a routine sortie at approximately 10 am.

"The Indian Air Force deeply regrets the loss of five personnel in the An-32 accident at Jorhat, Assam. Sqn Ldr Prashant Singh, Flt Lt Shubham Kumar, Sgt Jitendra Sharma, Agniveervayu Khemaram Kumawat and Agniveervayu Danish Alam made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty," the IAF said.

Sources said the aircraft lost control upon touchdown and skidded off the runway. It hurtled across the parallel taxiway, snapping into two segments before being engulfed in flames.

Since its induction in 1984, the An-32 has been the workhorse of the IAF flying vital supply missions into high-altitude mountain regions like Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh, air drop supplies to Siachen glacier and islands besides criss-crossing the country with supplies, troops and personnel.

The IAF currently operates over 100 such aircraft.

The An-32 aircraft was involved in over 18 accidents since its induction including a few major ones like the one in July 2016 when an aircraft carrying 29 personnel vanished over the Bay or Bengal. After years of searching, its deep-sea wreckage was finally located in January 2024.

Despite such accidents, the transport aircraft has an impressive safety record. But because of its age, New Delhi launched a replacement plan nearly two decades ago. However, two attempts to replace the ageing twin-engine turbo-prop aircraft with new planes did not work out.

In March 2016, the Defence Ministry approved buying 60 medium transport aircraft to replace the ageing AN-32 fleet.

The plan is to buy 12 in a fly away condition while the rest would be made in India.

Major AN-32 crashes

June 2019: Jorhat, 13 killed
July 2016: Bay of Bengal, 29 killed
June 2009: Arunachal Pradesh, 13 killed
March 1999: Delhi, 21 killed
March 1986: Jammu & Kashmir, 17 killed

The remains of the AN-32 aircraft in Jorhat, Assam on Saturday. PTI

Lt Gen Seth new Army Chief

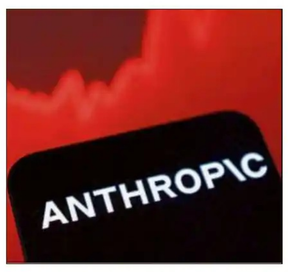
Lt Gen Dhiraj Seth was appointed as the next Chief of the Army Staff. He will take over from Gen Upendra Dwivedi on June 30. Lt Gen Seth is the first officer in three decades from the Armoured Corps to become the Army Chief.
Details on Page 11

India tests ballistic missile defence

India has successfully carried out flight-tests of key platforms this week to demonstrate its multi-layered ballistic missile defence system's power to intercept intercontinental missiles, joining an elite group of nations.
Details on Page 11

Anthropic suspends AI models' access; Indian users to be hit

NEW DELHI, PTI



Artificial intelligence major Anthropic has suspended access to its advanced AI models, Fable 5 and Mythos 5, for all customers globally following an export control directive from the US government citing national security concerns.

According to the company's statement, the US government issued the directive to suspend all access to Fable 5 and Mythos 5 by any foreign national, whether inside or outside the United States, including foreign national Anthropic employees.

"The net effect is that we must abruptly disable Fable 5 and Mythos 5 for all our customers to ensure compliance. Access to all other Anthropic models will not be affected," the company said.

The suspension is expected to impact Indian users and enterprises, as India is Anthropic's second-largest market.

The development follows major partnerships between the AI firm and Indian IT giants, including a recent deal with TCS to equip 50,000 employees with Anthropic's models, and a collaboration announced by Infosys in February to deploy advanced enterprise AI solutions using the Claude family of models.

Furthermore, select Indian government agencies and private firms were recently granted access to the Mythos model under a cybersecurity initiative called Project Glasswing, according to sources familiar with the matter.

The US directive follows earlier alarms raised within the Indian government regarding advanced AI models.

The meeting was convened amid concerns about Anthropic's Claude Mythos system, which the firm had withheld from release due to its ability to exploit bugs.

▸ Anthropic, Page 9

Ahead of Modi-Trump meet, US justifies attacks on ships

Warns violation of Hormuz blockade won't be tolerated

ANIRBAN BHAUMIK
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Donald Trump will meet in France on Wednesday, but a new irritant has emerged in the bilateral relations as Washington brushed aside New Delhi's protest over the United States Navy's attacks on merchant vessels in the Gulf of Oman, and avoided expressing any regret over the killing of three mariners from India.

As External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar called him to convey New Delhi's "strong protest" over the killing of three Indians in the American Navy's attacks on civilian ships in the Gulf of Oman, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio subtly justified the military offensives on commercial vessels.

Vessels anchored in the Strait of Hormuz off Bandar Abbas, Iran. AP

All commercial vessels should immediately comply with orders from US forces as they seek to uphold peace and security in the Strait of Hormuz, Rubio told Jaishankar, according to a readout issued by the US State Department in Washington on Saturday.

Jaishankar told Rubio that lethal actions against commercial shipping were "not justified".

The "violations of the US blockade" and the "illicit transport" of oil from Iran would "not be tolerated", Trump's secretary of state was quoted as replying during the phone call with his counterpart in New Delhi late on Friday.

▸ Modi-Trump meet, Page 9

Trump: Deal to be signed today

US President Donald Trump on Saturday said a deal to end the war with Iran would be signed on Sunday and that the Strait of Hormuz would be "open to all" immediately afterwards. The comments came hours after Pakistan indicated the US and Iran were in the final stage of talks. Page 12

Trump's drone attack claims 'baseless': Iran

US President Donald Trump's claim that Iran carried out a drone attack on Indian ships is "simply baseless", the Iranian embassy in New Delhi said. It described Trump's comments as an attempt to divert attention from the US strikes on ships.

Merc with couple rams bridge wall, woman dies of injuries; man falls to death into nullah

BENGALURU, DHNS: A late-night drive took a tragic turn as a speeding Mercedes-Benz crashed into a bridge wall on the Bengaluru-Chennai Expressway, killing two people near Hoskote early Saturday morning.

The victims were a 25-year-old woman and the person at the wheel, who fell off the bridge into a nullah and died instantly.

The Hoskote traffic police have identified the woman as Raziya (24), a private company employee and the other deceased as Rizwan (34), a city-based car dealer. Both were residents of HBR Layout, Banaswadi.

The wreckage of the Mercedes-Benz near Hoskote on Saturday.

According to the police, the duo had driven from Bengaluru toward the STR Road stretch to dine at the Madina Hotel. The accident happened on the Dodda Hulluru bridge as they were returning.

The police said Rizwan was speeding. While crossing the bridge, he lost control over the vehicle and crashed into the concrete side-wall of the bridge. He then plunged into the nullah below.

The safety mechanisms inside the car did not work, according to the police. Local residents rushed to the spot after hearing the loud crash. They found Raziya dead inside the car with severe injuries. They found Rizwan's body in the nullah after a search.

2 students killed, Page 4

Trees fall, roads inundated as heavy rain lashes city

BENGALURU, DHNS: Bengaluru was pounded by heavy rain on Saturday, causing problems for residents and creating long traffic jams on major roads. The Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) have asked people to avoid travelling unless it is necessary, as more rain is expected. The heavy downpour inundated roads and knocked down trees in several areas.

A large tree fell near the RRMR Junction towards Hudson Circle, slowing down traffic for a long time. Another tree fell on Koramangala 60-Feet Road near Canara Bank Circle, blocking the path for commuters.

Waterlogging also caused major traffic snarls. A road at Panathur Junction was flooded, slowing down vehicles going towards Kadubeesanahalli. Similarly, the road near Varthur Lake was inundated, making traffic move slowly towards Varthur Kodi.

The traffic police have urged people to drive carefully through flooded areas. The Bengaluru Central City Corporation has ordered teams to clear the roads quickly.

▸ Rain, Page 5A
More reports, Page 5A

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SCAM ECONOMY Fraud networks thrive behind encrypted chats and closed groups

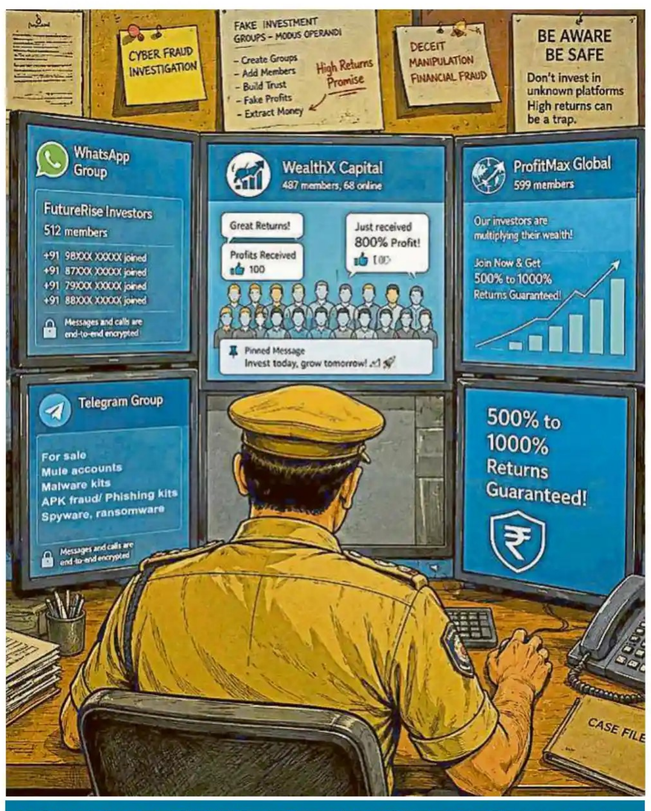
Dark web now hides in your social media feed

PRAJWAL D'SOUZA
BENGALURU, DHNS

For the longest time, threat actors and cybercriminals relied on dark web forums to access or buy the kits and tools needed to carry out online attacks and cybercrimes. That has now changed, and for the worse.

From recruiting accomplices and purchasing cybercrime or malware kits to contacting potential victims, cybercriminals are increasingly relying on social media platforms and messaging applications. Many of these offer end-to-end encryption, a boon for ordinary users but an ideal shield for threat actors.

According to data reviewed by *DH*, Karnataka police have, since 2025, taken down 465 suspicious groups on Telegram, 61 on WhatsApp and 268 on Facebook, along with 15 accounts on Instagram.



Platform misuse

While the general public relies on these platforms to stay connected, cybercriminals are exploiting them to carry out various types of fraud. One of the main scams plaguing the city is fake stock market or cryptocurrency investment fraud, otherwise known as pig butchering.

By creating fake groups on encrypted messaging platforms such as WhatsApp and Telegram, scammers lure victims into fraudulent investment schemes by promising returns of 500% to 1,000%. These groups, which impersonate genuine investment firms and host hundreds of members, allow scammers to carry out large-scale fraud over several months, police officers said.

Scammers also exploit Facebook and Instagram to post business advertisements using professional-sounding phrases such as "business partner", "serious candidates only" and "long-term partnerships" to appear genuine.

That is just the tip of the iceberg. Apart from offering pirated content, Telegram has increasingly emerged as a retail forum for cybercrime tools on the surface web.

HOW PLATFORMS ARE EXPLOITED FOR FRAUD

Platform	Groups or pages taken down	Purpose
Telegram	465	Recruitment/ sales
WhatsApp	61	Scam operations
Facebook	268	Recruitment ads, cybercrime hooks
Instagram	15	Recruitment ads, cybercrime hooks, deepfake visuals

Scammers use it to sell malware kits, offer mule accounts for rent to launder the proceeds of cybercrime, recruit mule account handlers and provide sophisticated tools such as APK fraud kits. Basic spyware, phishing tools and complete banking fraud kits are also sold, while scammers use the platform to connect with users and recruit them into their networks.

Earlier, accessing such illicit tools required specialised applications and proxies to enter the dark web.

"The most commonly used apps for these purposes are encrypted messaging apps such as WhatsApp and Telegram, where retailers of criminal services operate within closed and trusted groups," Pronab Mohanty, DGP, CID and Cyber Command, Karnataka, told *DH*.

"Encrypted apps are very difficult to scan using tools. Law enforcement may rarely 'penetrate' these chat groups. Usually, the crooks avoid using 'open' apps such as Instagram and Facebook, as these can be surveilled more easily," he said.

Bottlenecks

Multiple cybercrime investigators told *DH* that getting social media intermediaries to take down such groups remains challenging. Despite improved response times, by the time a nodal officer navigates the procedural delays, cybercriminals may have already closed the groups and moved elsewhere.

While the Cyber Command is actively tracking "mule herders" to identify mule account networks and dismantle money-laundering operations, stopping scammers from exploiting social media and messaging platforms remains an uphill battle.

"It is unfortunately true," Mohanty said. "But in recent times, especially after the formation of the Cyber Command, there has been seamless coordination with national agencies such as the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C) and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), and the process of blocking criminal websites has been hastened."

For instance, the Cyber Command recently took down more than 8,750 URLs linked to cricket betting in a single day, just before the IPL final.

"However, there has been considerable apathy and resistance from intermediaries in ensuring compliance. There is no panacea for this, and any improvement in compliance will be incremental," Mohanty said.

According to Mohanty, it is difficult to stop cybercriminals from creating identical groups, pages or websites through what are known as "mirror" URLs.

"But nowadays, powerful AI-driven tools are available that can continuously trawl the internet and spot these 'mirrors' almost as soon as they are created. The Cyber Command used such a tool to target cricket betting websites and URLs in real time with great success. Some intermediaries do try to cull fake and synthetic content, but not at a scale sufficient to stop such activities, unfortunately," he said.

Kebabs sold at a street food outlet in Shivajinagar.

Banned food colours continue to find their way into dishes

Experts warn of allergies and attention problems in children

AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

Despite the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) in the state banning the use of artificial colours in the preparation of kebabs, tandoori items, sweets and certain kinds of ice cream, they continue to be used unabated.

In 2024, the department banned the use of Rhodamine B after it was found in gobi Manchurian and cotton candy. In June 2025, the use of artificial colours, specifically Sunset Yellow and Carmoisine, was banned after they were found in vegetable, chicken and fish kebabs.

However, a reality check by *DH* across the city, especially at street food outlets, found that vendors continue to use them.

A vendor in Majestic told *DH* that they use a "little bit" of food colour in non-vegetarian items to make them appear attractive. "We use colours mostly in the chicken items that we serve, but the quantity is limited," the vendor said.

Abaz Khan, a chicken tandoor vendor in Shivajinagar, conceded that they use food colour to attract customers. "We are used to these items looking a certain colour. If we do not use them it does not feel and taste like a non-vegetarian dish. We are likely to lose customers if we don't make the food look presentable and attractive," he said.

Another sweet vendor in the same locality said, "For sweets like jalebi and Jangri, we add colour because the deep orange colour cannot be achieved."

Food Safety Department officials confirmed that they continue to book cases against hotels and street vendors found using banned colours.

"We are monitoring and conducting raids, but they tend to add colours and this usually happens late at night when the inspections are over," said Dr Suresh H, Food Safety Department Administrator, South Zone.

Speaking to *DH*, Edwina Raj, Head of Services, Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics, at a private hospital, said, "The strongest evidence of use of artificial colours relates to allergic reactions and increased hyperactivity or attention problems among children. They are sensitive to these additives. Certain food colours may also cause skin rashes, itching, headaches, or breathing difficulties in individuals."

Public health data gets a shared digital platform

BENGALURU, DHNS: The ICMR-National Institute of Epidemiology (ICMR-NIE), Chennai, in collaboration with the Centre for Data for Public Good (CDPG) and the Isaac Centre for Public Health (ICPH) at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, recently announced the launch of ADARV (Advanced Data Analytics for Public Health Action and Research Venture).

Developed through a collaboration between health researchers and technology experts, ADARV combines epidemiological expertise with modern data infrastructure and analytical capabilities. The platform enables users to rapidly analyse outbreak data and act on the findings without depending on external software or specialised statisticians.

Beyond analytics, ADARV also serves as a public health data warehouse for India. Researchers and institutions can upload their datasets and share them openly with the broader research community. This open and structured repository aims to shift the culture around health data from silos to sharing and build a growing pool of outbreak intelligence from which the entire research ecosystem can learn.

Dr Manoj V Murhekar, Scientist G and Director, ICMR-NIE; Prof Inder Gopal, Research Professor and Chair, CDPG, IISc; and Dr Prabhdeep Kaur, Professor and Chair, ICPH, IISc, delivered the inaugural remarks. Speakers noted that the increasing frequency and complexity of disease outbreaks have highlighted the need for robust digital tools to support surveillance and outbreak investigations.

ICMR-NIE brings decades of experience in epidemiological research, disease surveillance and outbreak investigation. CDPG led the design and development of the underlying data and analytics platform, drawing on its experience in building secure, scalable and interoperable data systems for public-good applications. ICPH contributed its expertise in research and population health systems.

ADARV is a free-to-use service, with access available upon request. Access can be sought by emailing adarv@nieicmr.org.in or visiting the ADARV website.

Late-night bike ride turns fatal for two college students

BENGALURU, DHNS

Atul Sibi and Gauri Shankar.

Senior police officers who inspected the accident spot, observed that a small road hump was located nearly 100 metres before the point of impact.

A late-night ride ended in tragedy after two nursing students from Kerala were killed when the Royal Enfield motorcycle they were riding crashed into a road divider near RR Dental College in Challaghatta on Mysore Road in the early hours of Saturday.

The deceased have been identified as Gauri Shankar, 22, a native of Ernakulam, and Atul Sibi, 22, from Kannur. Both were final-year nursing students at a private nursing college on Uttarahalli Road and were staying at a paying guest accommodation near the college.

According to the police, the two students had set out on a late-night ride towards Bidadi on Friday. After spending some time there, they were returning to their accommodation and had reportedly stopped at a roadside café for tea before proceeding towards Kengeri.

The accident occurred around 3.15 am. Preliminary investigations revealed that Gauri Shankar, who was riding the motorcycle, allegedly lost control of it while overspeeding and rammed into a road divider.

Senior officers from the West Division Traffic Police, who inspected the accident spot, observed that a small road hump was located nearly 100 metres before the point of impact. Investigators suspect that the rider, who was allegedly travelling at high speed, may not have noticed the hump in time and could have lost control of the motorcycle after crossing it. The motorcycle then crashed into the divider with considerable force.

The impact threw both riders into the air before they crashed onto the road, sustaining severe head injuries. Police said neither student was wearing a helmet at the time of the accident.

Passersby alerted the Kengeri Traffic police, who rushed to the spot and found both students lying in a pool of blood. The bodies were shifted for post-mortem examinations, and their families were informed about the accident.

The families of the deceased students arrived in Bengaluru in the evening and collected the bodies to take them to their native places for the final rites. They declined to give statements to the police as they were in shock.

The motorcycle belonged to Gauri Shankar's father. Police said Gauri Shankar had visited his native place a few months ago.

Woman accuses brother-in-law, husband of gun threat

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 35-year-old woman has accused her husband and brother-in-law of threatening her at gunpoint following alleged domestic abuse and harassment over demands for money from her parental home.

The incident came to light after the woman approached Annapurneshwari Nagar police and lodged a complaint.

The complainant, Bhavya, a homemaker, alleged that her husband had been demanding money from her and subjecting her to physical and mental harassment.

She further claimed that the accused threatened her with a pistol during an argument.

A senior police officer said a case had been registered based on the complaint. "However, we have not found any evidence so far to support her claim," the officer said.

The accused, who is a civil contractor, possesses a valid licence for the pistol. Police have not seized the weapon, and further investigation is underway.

Vacant roadside plots could become parking spaces

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bengaluru South City Corporation (BSCC) is exploring the idea of using vacant plots near roads that witness heavy traffic for parking and other purposes.

The BSCC Commissioner K N Ramesh has directed the officials to identify such vacant land so that the corporation can get into an agreement with the property owners.

"To reduce traffic congestion on high-traffic roads within the Corporation limits, the Commissioner instructed the engineers to identify vacant government or private lands adjacent to those roads in order to discuss and enter into agreements with the respective landowners for arranging vehicle parking, constructing bus bays, and constructing footpaths in those places," a statement by the corporation said.

Pointing out that there is a lack of proper water facility and maintenance at many public toilets, Ramesh directed the officials to ensure continuous water supply to public toilets and focus on the cleanliness of the toilets.

The BSCC is also looking at hiring nurses temporarily to ensure effective services at its healthcare facilities. "Since several nursing colleges have come forward to temporarily provide nurses, the Commissioner instructed the healthcare department officials to provide details of the nurses required for patient care in Corporation hospitals and Primary Health Centers (PHCs)," a statement by the BSCC said.

Database of facilities at lakes

BSCC Commissioner K N Ramesh has also asked the offices to prepare a database of the facilities available at the lakes in the BSCC jurisdiction. The database will provide details about the facilities like toilets, lighting, gate construction, wire fencing, and CCTV cameras available at each lake.

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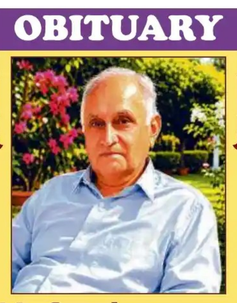
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RISE Conclave 2026 puts research, industry collaboration in focus

BENGALURU, DHNS

The sixth edition of the Research, Industry, Start-up and Entrepreneurship (RISE) Conclave 2026 was inaugurated on Saturday, turning Bengaluru into a meeting point for scientists, industry leaders, entrepreneurs and policymakers from across the country.

The two-day conclave, themed 'Innovation & Entrepreneurship Driven Growth for Viksit Bharat 2047', is being hosted by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) under the aegis of the Ministry of Science and Technology. It will conclude on June 14.

The inaugural sessions focused on a recurring concern within India's innovation ecosystem: translating scientific research into deployable technologies and commercially viable products. Speakers highlighted the need for closer collaboration among academia, research laboratories and industry to address real-world challenges and accelerate technology adoption.

A panel on science communication examined the role of the media and public engagement in making scientific research accessible and relevant to society.

The event also featured discussions on aerospace technologies. One of the sessions explored opportunities for collaboration among research institutions, industry and government agencies in the aerospace sector. Representatives from CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL), ISRO, Larsen & Toubro Defence and Tata Advanced Systems deliberated on how partnerships could help address technological challenges and strengthen domestic aerospace capabilities. Another discussion focused on 'Building the Next Generation Start-ups in Aerospace'.

Dignitaries at the two-day RISE Conclave 2026, hosted by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research under the aegis of the Ministry of Science and Technology, in Bengaluru. CREDIT: CSIR

Focus on start-ups

A dedicated session was also scheduled to examine how start-ups can leverage patented technologies developed by public research institutions. The conclave was formally inaugurated by Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh, who also released an NAL patent portfolio to support the commercialisation of start-ups.

Speaking at the inaugural event about the planned push for start-ups, the minister said, "When we talk about the overall growth of the country, of the overall economy, no government anywhere in the world can provide a job to each and every individual... What else then? That's where these avenues come in. That's when we turn to start-ups. In just about 10 years, if we could generate 24-25 lakh jobs out of these start-ups, it is clear that there is some meaning to this."

The minister also highlighted the role of start-ups in keeping pace with global trends and achieving international benchmarks.

He also inaugurated a start-up, science and technology exhibition featuring about 50 companies from across the country. The exhibition was a major highlight of the conclave, with companies showcasing innovations in aerospace, food technology, AI and data science.

As part of the conclave, CSIR also signed multiple MoUs.

What's next?

On June 14, the conclave will focus broadly on artificial intelligence, data science and food technology. Sessions will explore the ethical and societal implications of AI, venture capital and funding opportunities for start-ups, and the need to align academic research with industry requirements.

Car overturns; one dead, three injured

BENGALURU, DHNS: A man was killed and three motorcycle riders were injured after a speeding car allegedly rammed into two motorcycles and overturned near Indraprastha Apartment on Mysore Road on Saturday morning.

According to the Kengeri traffic police, the Maruti Suzuki Eeco was allegedly being driven in a rash and negligent manner. Following the collision, the driver lost control and the car overturned multiple times.

Sukhdev, 45, a carpenter travelling in the car, was thrown out during the rollover. The vehicle then landed on him, killing him on the spot. Three riders on the two motorcycles sustained injuries.

Passersby and police rushed the injured to a local hospital, where they are undergoing treatment. Kengeri traffic police have registered a case and are investigating further.

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*Amul (GCMMF), has been ranked the No. 1 cooperative in the world based on GDP per capita performance, according to the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) World Cooperative Monitor 2025.

Woman run over by school bus

Waterlogged road concealed pothole, leading to fatal fall

BENGALURU, DHNS

A woman was killed after falling off her two-wheeler and being run over by a school bus in the Whitefield traffic police limits on Saturday morning.

The deceased has been identified as Kanta. According to the police, she was taking her daughter, Neha, to college when the accident occurred while they were travelling towards Siddapura from Marathahalli.

Kanta

Heavy rain on Friday night had left the stretch waterlogged, concealing potholes. Kanta's scooter allegedly hit a pothole and skidded, throwing both mother and daughter onto the road. A school bus travelling behind them then ran over Kanta.

Local residents rushed to her aid, but she died on the spot due to severe injuries. Neha escaped with minor injuries.

Two tractors crushed by tree

A 400-year-old banyan tree was uprooted following heavy rain at Balenahalli in Sulibele Hobli, Hoskote taluk, on Friday night. No casualties were reported. However, the falling tree crushed two tractors and a cattle shed nearby.

Cartoons, censorship shape Maya Kamath memorial

SUBHASHINI RAMASAMY
BENGALURU, DHNS

Speakers at a panel discussion on political cartooning in Bengaluru on Saturday.

The Indian Institute of Cartoonists (IIC) commemorated the 75th birth anniversary of renowned political cartoonist Maya Kamath and honoured winners of the Maya Kamath Memorial International Cartoon Contest 2026 in Bengaluru on Saturday.

The ceremony featured the presentation of the 'Barton Award for Excellence' in Cartooning to veteran cartoonist Subhani Shaik. Speaking on the occasion, V G Narendra of the Indian Institute of Cartoonists reflected on Maya Kamath's legacy.

The chief guest, artist and sculptor Balan Nambiar described Maya Kamath's work as one marked by "clarity of line and humour." "Maya and I would often judge painting contests together and have discussions at length," Balan told *DH*. "She was someone who would never boast about her work."

The Maya Kamath Memorial International Cartoon contests saw over 1,000 entries from 70 countries. Bulgarian artist Valentin Georgiev's piece that showed women going beyond the shackles of religious prohibitions bagged the first place. From India, Kerala's Subhash Babu was one of the two cartoonists who stood third.

After being conferred the prestigious silver plaque for his lifetime achievement, Subhani Shaik took the stage to share anecdotes of his time working with Maya Kamath. He also expressed his gratitude for the award and said that artificial intelligence can never take over political cartooning as it is deeply personal.

Speaking to *DH*, Subhani explained that cartoons are not simply humorous, but also offer constructive criticism. "We political cartoonists need to immediately respond to developments and capture the reality in our cartoons. Only then can we leave an impact on the readers," he said.

The event saw a panel discussion on 'political cartooning: thriving or witnessing pushback?' featuring panelists C S Lakshmi, founder-director, SPARROW, cartoonist Sandeep Adhwaryu, Deepa Kamath, daughter of Maya Kamath, and Veera Raghavan, a journalist.

The panel, moderated by journalist and documentary filmmaker Nupur Basu, explored the challenges facing political cartooning, including growing censorship and the rise of meme culture, with the panelists unanimously agreeing that cartoons go beyond virality.

Bengaluru wakes up to showers, braces for more

Nearly 80 wards receive over 10 mm of rain

BENGALURU, DHNS

Heavy monsoon rain continued to lash the city on Saturday, with several areas witnessing intense evening showers, particularly in South Bengaluru and RR Nagar.

According to the Varunamitra dashboard of the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC), as of 8.30 pm on Saturday, Herohalli recorded the highest rainfall at 37 mm, followed by Kengeri at 24.5 mm, Hampinagar at 20 mm and Doddabidarakallu at 18.5 mm. At least eight wards in the city received more than 10 mm of rain.

The city also received heavy rain from Friday night through the early hours of Saturday. According to India Meteorological Department (IMD) data, the automatic weather station at GKVK recorded 13 mm of rainfall, while the Bengaluru district AWS recorded 7.5 mm. The IMD's Bengaluru City observatory recorded 22.5 mm.

According to data from the Varunamitra dashboard, between 8.30 am on Friday and 8.30 am on Saturday, nearly 80 wards received more than 10 mm of rain. Puttenahalli and Sarakki recorded the highest rainfall at 82 mm each, followed by HSR Layout at 58 mm, Gottigere and Begur at 57.5 mm each, and Bilekahalli at 57 mm.

Wet week ahead

According to the IMD forecast, the southwest monsoon is advancing across Karnataka, and Bengaluru is expected to receive more rain over the next week. While heavy rain is likely on Sunday, light to moderate rain has been forecast for the rest of the week.

Vehicles wade through a waterlogged road in Bengaluru following heavy rain on Saturday. CREDIT: BTP

A fallen tree blocks a road in Koramangala.

Trees fall, roads inundated

Rain, From Page 3

Corporation Commissioner Jagadeesh G directed the forest department to remove all fallen trees on a war footing. He noted that because Bengaluru has so many vehicles, a single fallen tree can block traffic instantly.

Emergency teams have been sent to clear the roads so people can move safely. The commissioner has also ordered officials to check all areas for dry or dangerous tree branches in parks and on roadsides and cut them down before they fall and cause accidents.

Civic workers clear a fallen tree that blocked a road following heavy rain.

Over 2,700 free student bus passes issued to boys in just 2 days

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

More than 2,700 free student bus passes have been issued across the state's four state-run transport corporations within two days of the government expanding the scheme to include male students.

According to data shared by the transport department, the four corporations have cumulatively issued 2,764 free bus passes to male students since June 12, when the government issued new guidelines for distribution of free bus passes. The number of passes issued surged from 821 on June 12 to 1,943 on June 13.

The North West Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NWKRTC) recorded the highest uptake, issuing 995 passes to male students over the two days. The Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) followed with 860 passes, while Kalyana Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (KKRTC) distributed 641 passes. In Bengaluru, the Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC), which began issuing passes under the revised norms on June 13, has given away 268 passes.

The number of applications is expected to increase further in the coming weeks as colleges and schools reopen and students complete admissions for the new academic year, shared a transport official.

Earlier this week, Karnataka widened eligibility for free student bus passes to include students from the state pursuing education in neighbouring states and union territory.

Under the revised guidelines, the benefit now extends to students studying in recognised institutions located in border areas of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Goa, as well as Union Territory of Puducherry.

Additionally, Transport Minister Byrathi Suresh had announced on Tuesday that students who had already purchased bus passes would receive a full refund. However, refund modalities were yet to be finalised, the official told *DH*.

Police summon Ricky Rai over resurfaced Lamborghini clip

BENGALURU, DHNS

Ricky Rai's Lamborghini is seen emitting flames on Airport Road in the viral video being examined by police. CREDIT: BTP

A video allegedly showing a Lamborghini owned by Ricky Rai, son of late underworld don-turned-businessman Muthappa Rai, emitting flames and being driven recklessly on Airport Road resurfaced and went viral on Saturday.

Police, who examined the social media footage, said the video showed the vehicle allegedly being driven in a manner that endangered public safety and created fear among road users on Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) Road shortly after midnight on May 20.

"The CCTV footage collected from Sadahalli Toll Plaza confirmed that the Lamborghini had passed through the toll at the time mentioned in the notice," a senior police officer told *DH*.

Following a thorough scrutiny of the footage, Devanahalli Traffic police issued a notice seeking Ricky Rai's explanation regarding the resurfaced video. The notice pertains to a Lamborghini bearing registration number KA-05-NR-0009 and cites alleged violations under Sections 184 (dangerous driving), 52 (unauthorised vehicle modification), 190(2) (violation of safety and noise-control standards) and 177 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, along with Section 281 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023.

Police have asked Rai to appear before the Devanahalli Traffic police within three days with the vehicle and relevant documents, and submit a written explanation. The notice states that failure to appear could invite further legal action without any additional notice.

The development comes barely months after Ricky Rai faced legal trouble for allegedly drifting the same Lamborghini at Anil Kumble Circle on MG Road and Cubbon Road on March 21. CCTV footage later established that Rai was behind the wheel after he initially denied driving the vehicle.

Video was AI-generated: Lawyer

Speaking to DH, Narayana Swamy, advocate for Ricky Rai, claimed that the viral video was AI-generated and did not depict any recent incident involving his client's Lamborghini.

"The footage circulating on social media is not authentic and appears to have been created using artificial intelligence. We will submit a detailed reply to the notice issued by the police along with all supporting documents," the advocate said.

CORRIGENDUM AGAINST TENDER NOTICE NO. N_02_HQ_2026-27

Corrigendum against Tender No.: N_02_HQ_2026-27, Date: 08-05-2026, for the work:- Provision of 4 x 48 fiber OFC for communication backbone in section New Tinsukia- Dibrugarh & Simalguri - Dibrugarh (143 RKM) of Tinsukia Division under HUN6 sections covered within sanctioned KAVACH territory. **Cost of work:** ₹ 13,86,39,633.52/-;

The above tender closing date now to be read as 19-06-2026 at 12:00 hrs. instead of 09-06-2026 at 12:00 hours.

For details corrigendum kindly visit **www.ireps.gov.in**.

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INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY KHARAGPUR
IIT Kharagpur PLATINUM JUBILEE

Advt. No.: R/03/2026 dated June 01, 2026

The Institute invites **Online Applications** from Indian Nationals for the post of **Registrar** in **Level-14** of Pay Matrix:-144200-218200/- on Deputation terms or on Contract basis.

For details and updates visit: (http://www.iitkgp.ac.in» Jobs »Staff Opening). Last date for submission of Online Application: **30.06.2026**

CBC 21255/11/0001/2627

Dean (Admin)

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

E-Auction for leasing of Parcel Space, Parking & Advertisement and Miscellaneous contracts by Bengaluru Division

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites bidders for E-Auctions on the following Dates:

1. **PARKING**: 17-06-2026, 22-06-2026, 30-06-2026.
2. **ADVERTISING**: 22-06-2026, 23-06-2026, 24-06-2026, 29-06-2026.
3. **PARCELS**: 15-06-2026, 16-06-2026, 25-06-2026, 29-06-2026
4. **PAY & USE**: 17-06-2026, 22-06-2026, 23-06-2026
5. **ATM & MISCELLANEOUS**: 19-06-2026, 17-06-2026, 19-06-2026, 26-06-2026
6. **CATERING**: 12-06-2026, 30-06-2026

For details log on : www.ireps.gov.in
Keep visiting the website for any corrigendum till closing date

Senior Divisional Commercial Manager
PUB/201/AAF/PRB/SWR/2026-27 **Bengaluru**

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ನಂ.1, ಮಂಗಳೂರು, ಪಣಂಬೂರು–575010
(ಭಾರತ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ಸಚಿವಾಲಯದ ಅಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ, ಸ್ವಾಯತ್ತ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ)
PM SHRI KENDRIYA VIDYALAYA
NO.1, MANGALURU, PANAMBUR, KARNATAKA - 575 010
(An Autonomous Body Under Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)

WALK IN INTERVIEW

Walk in interview for the following posts on contractual basis for the academic year 2026-2027 on 22nd June 2026 **at 10:00 AM in PM SHRI Kendriya Vidyalaya No.1, Premises. Reporting Time: 8.30:00 am.**

POST	Date of Interview
PGTs/ PGT HINDI, PGT BIOLOGY TGTs/ TGT ENGLISH, TGT MATHS, TGT SANSKRIT PRIMARY TEACHER COUNSELLOR SPECIAL EDUCATOR BALVATIKA TEACHERS	22 JUNE 2026 (MONDAY)

For details of eligibility & educational qualification, please log on to **https://no1mangalore.kvs.ac.in** Applicants to produce original as well as Xerox copies (self-attested) of all certificates and one passport size photograph and attend the interview on the said date.

Phone Number: 0824-2407337 **Sd/- Principal**

झारखण्ड सरकार, पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमण्डल विभाग
पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमण्डल, लोहरदगा

ई–प्रोक्योरमेंट अल्प कालीन निविदा सूचना
PR No. 293481 का सप्तम आमंत्रण
निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या DWSD/Lohardaga/26/2022-23 दिनांक : 12.06.2026

1	कार्य का नाम – Detailed survey, designing and drawing, Construction of Weir with allied works etc. all complete job for **Arkosa and Adjoining villages Rural Water Supply Scheme** D.W. & S. Division Lohardaga on turnkey basis."	
2	प्राक्कलित राशि	1253.79 लाख रूपये
3	अग्रधन की राशि	12.54 लाख रूपये
4	परिमाण विपत्र का मूल्य	0.10 लाख रूपये
5	कार्य पूरा करने की अवधि	09 months + 3 months (Trial and run for rectification of defects etc.)
6	वेबसाइट पर निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि	15.06.2026, 03:30 बजे अपराह्न से
7	प्री बीड मिटिंग की तिथि एवं स्थान	दिनांक 29 06 2026, समय 11:30 बजे पूर्वाह्न में अभियंता प्रमुख, पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता विभाग का कार्यालय, नेपाल हाउस, रांची
8	निविदा प्राप्ति (ऑन लाईन बिडींग) की अन्तिम तिथि एवं समय	07.07.2026, 01:00 बजे अपराह्न तक
9	सरकार के सचिव, सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी एवं ई– गवर्नेंस, झारखण्ड मंत्रालय, के ज्ञापांक 120 दिनांक 03.10.2023 के आलोक में विपत्र का मूल्य एवं अग्रधन की राशि Online जमा करने की अन्तिम तिथि एवं समय	07.07.2026, 01:00 बजे अपराह्न तक
10	तकनीकी बीड खोलने की तिथि एवं समय	08.07.2026, 01:15 बजे अपराह्न से
11	तकनीकी बीड खोलने का स्थान	कार्यपालक अभियंता,पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमंडल, लोहरदगा।
12	निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी का नाम/पदनाम एवं मोबाईल नं0	कार्यपालक अभियंता, पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमण्डल, लोहरदगा। मो0 8084784990
13	ई–प्रोक्योरमेंट सेल का हेल्पलाईन नं0	8084784990

नोट:– वैसे सम्वेदक जो पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता विभाग में समुचित श्रेणी में निबंधित नहीं है, वे भी निविदा में भाग ले सकते हैं, परन्तु कार्यावंटन के 60 दिनों के अंदर पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता में समुचित श्रेणी में निबंधन करवा लेना अनिवार्य होगा। ऐसी स्थिति में उन्हे विभागीय पत्रांक 678(CDO) दिनांक 20.10.2012 के अनुसार इस आशय का शपथ पत्र देना अनिवार्य होगा कि राज्यान्तर्गत किसी भी थाने में उनके विरूद्ध कोई अपराधिक मामला दर्ज नहीं है और वे निविदा के अन्य सभी शर्तों को पूरा करते हैं। प्राक्कलित राशि घट या बढ़ सकती है, तदनुसार अग्रधन की राशि देय होगी।

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PR.NO.382267 Lohardaga(26-27):D

कार्यपालक अभियंता
पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमण्डल, लोहरदगा

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

Palakkad Division
E-Tender Notice No. PGT/OT/14/2026 dated 12/06/2026

For and behalf of the President of India, the Sr. Divisional Engineer/Co-ordination / Southern Railway / Palakkad invites E-TENDERS for the following works.

Sl. No	Name of work	Approximate Cash value in (₹) Lakhs	Bid Security Amount ₹	Tender closing date on 15.00 hrs.	Completion Period in months
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1.	Shoranur: Improvements to ballast depot for augmentation of depot capacity	436.26	8,72,500/-	14/07/2026	Fifteen
2.	Removal of vegetation, bushes in midsection along side track in between the tracks, side drain, catch water drain. cleaning in Senior Section Engineer/Permanent. Way/West/Podanur section for a period of 1 year.	150.72	3,01,500/-	14/07/2026	Twelve
3.	Removal of vegetation, bushes in midsection along side track in between the tracks, side drain, catch water drain cleaning, in Senior Section Engineer/Permanent Way/East/Palakkad Section for a period of 1 year.	35.50	71,000/-	03/07/2026	Twelve
4.	Removal of vegetation, bushes in midsection along side track in between the tracks, side drain, catch water drain cleaning, in Senior Section Engineer/Permanent Way/West/Palakkad Section for a period of 1 year.	120.31	2,40,600/-	14/07/2026	Twelve
5.	Removal of vegetation, bushes in midsection along side track in between the tracks, side drain, catch water drain cleaning in Senior Section Engineer Permanent Way/Shoranur section for a period of 1 year.	119.23	2,38,500/-	14/07/2026	Twelve
6.	Mangaluru Central Proposed Standardization of cutting area on both ends of the tun the tunnel no.4 A at Kulasekhara (from Km 8/400-8/500 and km 9/100-9/600)	1063.55	21,27,100/-	14/07/2026	Twelve
7.	Palakkad Division Divisional Engineer/East Jurisdiction Proposed renewal of SEJ to TWSEJ and Glue Joints.	263.96	5,27,900/-	14/07/2026	Twelve
8.	Palakkad Division Sr Divisional Engineer/West/ Palakkad jurisdiction - Supply, Installation and maintenance of auto chlorination plants at various stations of Senior Section Engineer/Works/Calicut, Senior Section Engineer/Works/Kannur and Senior Section Engineer/Works/Mangalore sections for a period of 2 Years.	22.59	45,200/-	03/07/2026	Six

1. All the contracts on Works/goods/services will be subject to the new GST Act as applicable from time to time.
2. Contractors/Suppliers have to register themselves with GST authorities and to furnish the GST registration number in order to process the bills from 01.7.2017 onwards.
3. For complete details of the above tenders please visit Web site "**http://www.ireps.gov.in.**"

Note: It is the responsibility of the Tenderer to check any corrigendum issued for any correction or modifications uploaded subsequently in website; the same shall be taken in to account while submitting Tender.

Sr. Divisional Engineer/Co-ord Southern Railway/Palakkad
(For and on behalf of the President of India)

◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL

Bengaluru Lake Run: Flag-off by Krishna Byre Gowda; Jakkur Lake; 6.15 am.

'Girls First' Hackathon: Inauguration by Priyank Kharge and Ramalinga Reddy; Hopeworks Foundation; Jyoti Nivas College, Koramangala; 9.45 am.

Felicitation of Student Achievers: Justice Shreeshananda and TA Balakrishna to be present; Vijaya College Retired Teachers Association; Vijaya College, RV Road; 10.30 am.

Justice N Santosh Hegde's 86th Birthday Celebration: Presided over by Woode P Krishna and Satya Rao Mane; Priyanka Residency, opposite Jai Bharath Nagar Bus Stop, Banaswadi Main Road; 11.30 am.

CULTURAL

Book Launch: Release of 'Orekore-Dodda Bengalurina Sanna Atmakathe' by G Parameshwara, A V Chandrashekar, Naresh Narasimhan, Sureshkumar, and K E Radhakrishna; Ankita Pustaka; Science Centre, Jain University, JC Road; 9.30 am.

Discussion on 'A Critical History of Kannada Literature': Interactive session with Rajendra Chenni, EV Ramakrishnan, Vanamala Viswanatha, and N S Gundur; Bangalore International Centre (BIC) Domlur; 11.30 am.

Drama Performance: 'Mahapeede Mahabala' to be staged; Yuvapatha, Yuvaka Sangha, Jayanagar 4th Block; 4.30 pm and 7.30 pm.

Dance Drama: 'Muttu Bandide Kerige', a dance production on Kanakadasa presented by Bhramari Dance Institution; concept and lyrics by Ka Ta Chikkanna, music by Pravin D Rao; H M Revanna and BS Manjunatha to be present; Santakavi Kanakadasa and Tatvapadakarara Adhyayana Kendra; Ravindra Kalakshetra; 6.30 pm.

Invites to be published in this column should be sent to: **incitytoday@deccanherald.co.in.** Please note that hard copies will not be accepted

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST

Generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain and thundershowers

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	29.2°C
Minimum	19.8°C
Rainfall (as of 8:30 am)	--
Humidity (as of 5:30 pm)	79%
Sunset (June 14)	6:46 pm
Sunrise (June 15)	5:53 am
Moonrise	3:41 am
Moonset	4:59 pm

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

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Shri D K Shivakumar
Hon'ble Chief Minister

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA

Shri Krishna Byre Gowda
Hon'ble Bengaluru Development Minister

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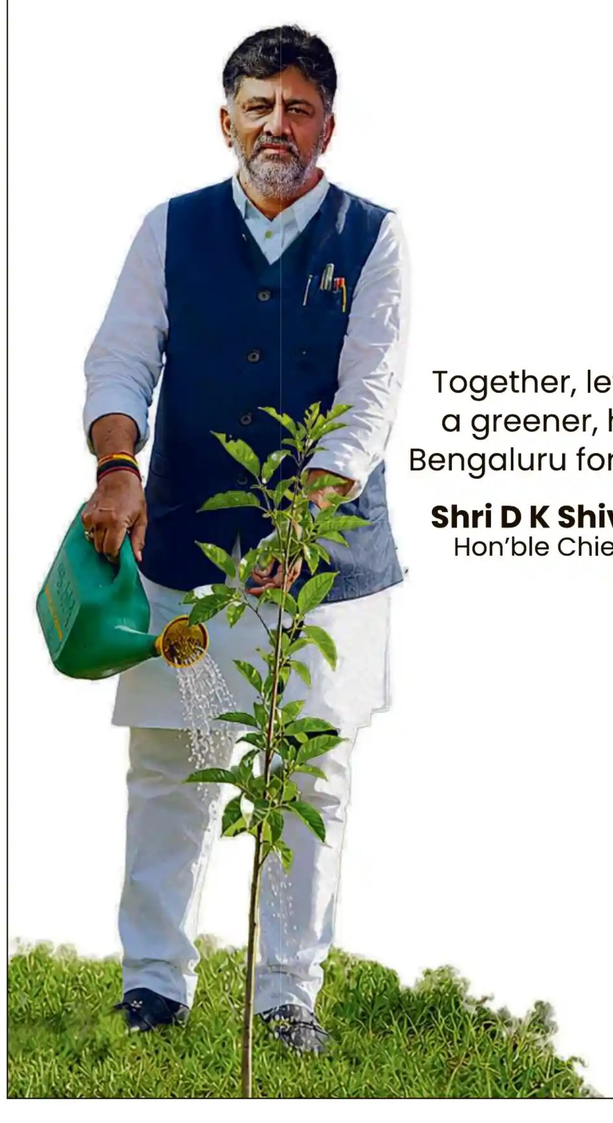
Saturday
27
June, 2026



Planting Locations Across Bengaluru

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Nada Prabhu Kempegowda Layout - Bengaluru West
Banashankari 6th Stage Layout - Bengaluru South

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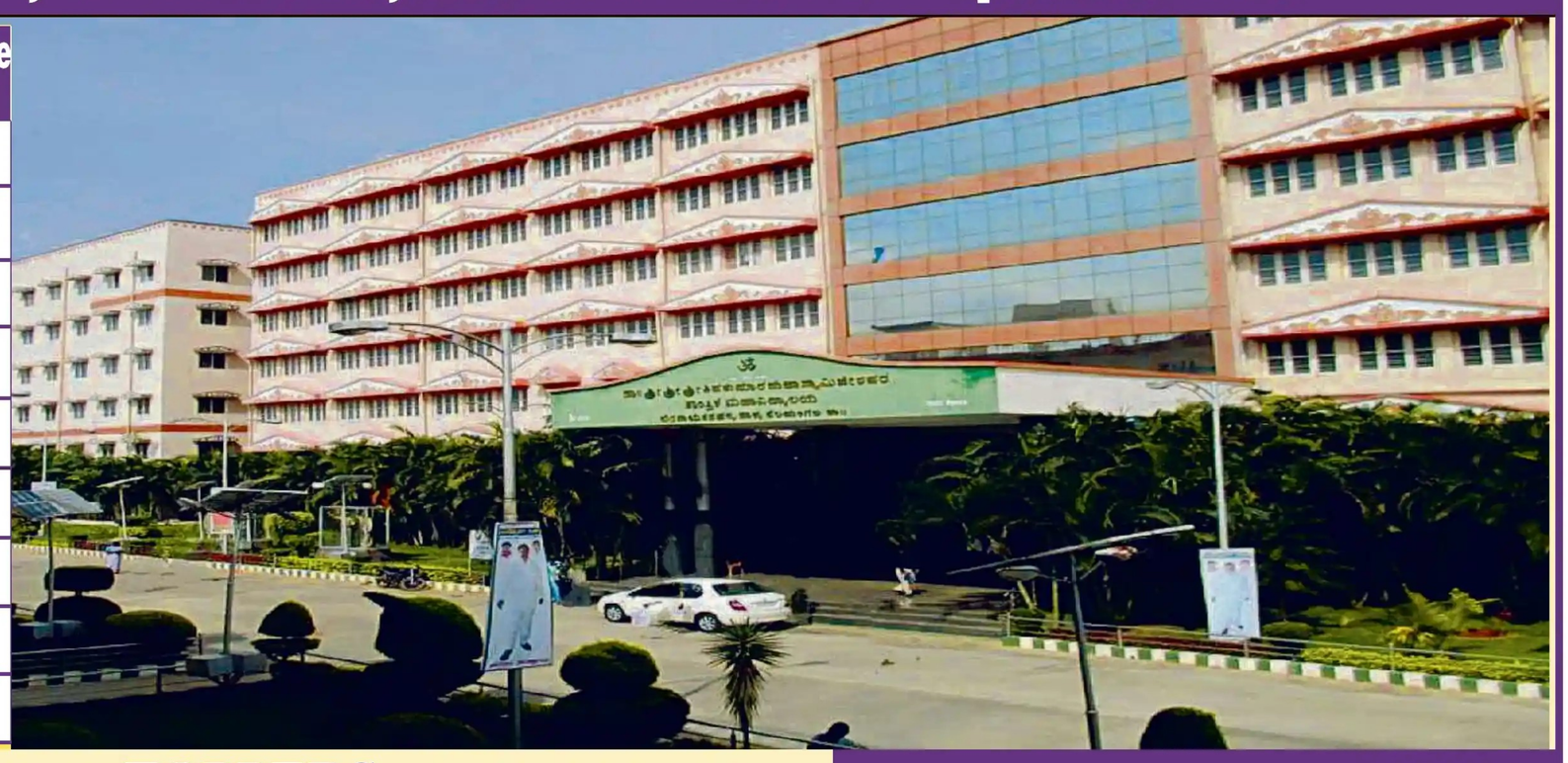

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VINITHA JAIN, R/o 21-A Adarsh Vista, Basavanagar Main Road, Bangalore, changed my name as Vinita Jain W/o Anil Baradia.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **ROHAN SANGANAGOUDA ADAPUR,** residing at SNR SAFA, B Block 206, Chikkadunnasandra, Sarjapura Hobli, Bengaluru- 562125 have changed my name to **ROHAN ADAPUR** vide affidavit dated 11-06-2026 sworn before notary Roopa G Bhandare, Bengaluru. Henceforth I shall be called as **ROHAN ADAPUR** only.

Lost

DOCUMENT LOST
I, **N M Palani Vel,** No. 28, 3rd Cross, Near Anjaneya Temple, Vayu Nandha Layout, Hebbal Kempapura, Benglauru-560024, have lost my **Original Land Mother deed Document No./ Identification: 1562/2015, 1366/2015** and **1053/2020.** While travelling Bhuvaneshwar Nagar to Esteem Mall (10-06-2026), Bengaluru. If found please contact: **7639091293** (Lost Report No. 2252042/2026)

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CM hints at merging schools with poor enrolment

BENGALURU, DHNS: With Chief Minister D K Shivakumar seeking a report from the officials of the department of school education on schools with zero enrolment, it appears the government is mulling the merger of schools with low enrolment.

At a departmental review meeting on Saturday, he informed officials, "I have the list of schools where enrolment is under 30. There are 964 schools where admissions have dropped to single digits. We will consider the best options and see whether we can club all those schools."

"We have come across instances of teachers reporting non-existent admissions to continue getting salaries, and avoid transfers. We have information on such teachers, and it will be discussed at the next Cabinet meeting."

According to information shared by the CM at the news conference held after the meeting, 4,072 schools house fewer than 10 students, while 3,247 report fewer than five students. The strength at 12,696 schools ranges from 6 to 20, while at 4,997 schools, it ranges from 21 to 30.

This placement season, firms look for degrees plus proven skills

Some companies hold hackathons; colleges collect skill lab fees

BENGALURU, DHNS

This placement season, companies are looking for graduates with additional skills from engineering colleges in the state.

Placement officers at some engineering colleges said that additional skills have been one of the criteria companies use to filter students at the entry level itself. Some companies demand the certificate for the acquired skills, while others even demand that the students prove the skills they claim.

K N Subramanya, principal of RV College of Engineering, said, "Interestingly, companies have switched to hackathon-based hiring, mainly at the entry level. While they conduct a 24-hour to 36-hour hackathon, they will get to know the skills acquired by the students."

He added, "We prepare our students for such kinds of hiring by giving them project-based experiments."

As companies are prioritising Artificial Intelligence (AI) over manpower, even the engineering colleges are giving importance to training students in skills as per industry demand.

"Having skills with a general degree is a must now. Artificial Intelligence, cloud computing, and sales force are the main skills demanded by the companies," said Guru Venkatesh, senior vice president, Placements and Skill Development, Dayanand Sagar College of Engineering.

With the companies demanding additional skills, the skill centres at private engineering colleges are active.

The state government has allowed colleges to collect skill lab fees between Rs 5,000 and Rs 20,000 as per the skill training they offer for students.

Placement officers at some engineering colleges said that additional skills have been one of the criteria companies use to filter students at the entry level itself. AI IMAGE

Artificial intelligence enters recruitment process

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly being used by companies during campus hiring to assess candidates.

Placement officers said many recruiters now use AI-powered tools at the very first stage of selection process to evaluate students' aptitude and skills.

These tools are being deployed to assess candidates' subject knowledge and technical competence, helping companies streamline screening process.

Engg colleges in tier 2 & 3 cities hit hard

According to placement officers, the slowdown in campus recruitment has hit engineering colleges in tier-2 and tier-3 cities the hardest.

"Even colleges in tier-1 cities are struggling to attract companies for campus recruitment. One can imagine the situation in tier-2 and tier-3 institutions. Until a few years ago, such colleges managed to secure placements for at least 50% of their students. In some cases, that has now dropped to almost zero," said the principal of a private engineering college. Placement officers also pointed to a decline in the number of mass recruiters visiting campuses this year. "The drop in bulk hiring is largely due to the growing adoption of AI," said the placement officer at a private university offering engineering.

KEA yet to start counselling; COMEDK likely to stick to schedule

KEA yet to receive final seat matrix for engg courses from govt

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) having delayed the commencement of counselling for engineering and other professional courses, the Consortium of Medical Engineering and Dental Colleges of Karnataka (COMEDK) may be impelled to proceed with its seat allotment process in keeping with its schedule.

The consensual agreement signed between the state government and the Karnataka Unaided Private Engineering Colleges Association (KUPECA) allows the COMEDK to proceed with its counselling schedule in the event of KEA not commencing seat allotment by July 10.

"We have kickstarted the process, and it is at the option entry stage. But in keeping with the terms of the agreement we will wait till July 10 to announce the counselling results. If KEA fails to complete the first round of counselling by then, we will declare our results since majority of those who will claim our seats are from outside Karnataka," said a COMEDK official.

Meanwhile, the KEA is yet to receive the final seat matrix for engineering courses as on Saturday, as a cloud of uncertainty hangs over the counselling schedule.

Medical Education Minister Dr Sharan Prakash Patil, co-chairman of the KEA, said that he would discuss the issue with Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, since it is the latter who has to approve the final seat matrix in the absence of a dedicated Minister for Higher Education.

Meanwhile, the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has released its admission calendar for the 2026-27 academic year, according to which admissions to engineering courses must be completed by August 15.

The KUPECA has written to the AICTE Chairman seeking the extension of the last date from August 15 to September 15.

No need to check IDs of all customers, HM tells bars, pubs

BENGALURU, DHNS: Home Minister Priyank Kharge on Saturday clarified that licensed bars, pubs and other alcohol-serving establishments were not required to check and store identity proof of every customer.

The clarification comes amid confusion over the recent circular by DG&IGP M A Saleem.

Kharge said legal age for purchasing and consuming liquor in Karnataka is 21 years and that serving, selling or permitting alcohol consumption by anyone below that age is illegal. He said establishments are expected to verify identity of individuals who appear to be below 21 years of age and deny entry unless they are accompanied by adults.

BJP-JD(S) slam Congress for taking over farmers' land

BENGALURU, DHNS: The BJP and JD(S) have intensified their attack on the government over the proposed Bidadi Township project, accusing it of favouring builders while ignoring the concerns of farmers who have been protesting against land acquisition for over 470 days.

Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka warned that the government would face the wrath of farmers if it proceeded with the project. In a post on X, he questioned the government's urgency in acquiring 499 acres of fertile agricultural land despite sustained protests by farmers for more than 15 months.

Alleging that the project was intended to benefit the "builder mafia", Ashoka said the government was depriving farmers of their livelihood. He also took a swipe at the Congress leadership, accusing it of corruption.

Union Minister H D Kumaraswamy said his party was prepared to fight the issue both legally and through public protests. Responding to Congress leader D K Suresh's claim that the township project had originated during Kumaraswamy's tenure as chief minister in 2006, he said circumstances had changed significantly over the past two decades.

"Yes, it was our project in 2006, but the situation today is entirely different. Let the farmers speak about the present reality. They will give the right answer," he told reporters. He also criticised the government for filing police cases against farmer leaders participating in the agitation. Warning of a stronger protest if such action continued, he said he would join the farmers' struggle.

Villages in Bidadi split over surrendering land to govt

ASHWIN B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

The issuance of the final notification to acquire 518 acres of land for the first phase of the proposed township in Bidadi has created ideological and economic faultlines among the local farming community, with farmers in one village agreeing to part with their land and those in the neighbouring one objecting to it.

While the landowners in Kempaiyanapalya welcomed the acquisition, their counterparts in Oderahalli vowed to protect their fertile lands. The two villages are located only a few kilometres apart.

The farmers in Kempaiyanapalya—where 359 acres will be acquired—reasoned that broken borewells, labour shortage, industrial pollution and severe farm distress forced them to part with their land.

A farmland at a village in Bidadi. DH FILE PHOTO

"We are supporting the project because (CM) D K Shivakumar has promised excellent compensation and partnership," said a farmer from Kempaiyanapalya who is surrendering his six acres. "Agriculture has become impossible here. I dug six borewells and all of them failed. The coconut trees are drying up and we cannot find any labour. If this area is developed, the land value will shoot up to Rs 10 crore per acre in the future. Our children will get IT-BT jobs."

At Oderahalli, where 63 acres have been notified, anger is mounting against the state government, especially against Shivakumar. "They call this barren land? We are growing ragi, coconut and baby corn. Many are running successful sericulture businesses," said a farmer in Oderahalli. "We have running borewells with five to six inches of water at just 200 feet. Our land is as precious to us as our lives."

Farmers also expressed scepticism over the government's promise of industrial jobs.

The farmers with fewer land holdings alleged that those who supported the acquisition were real estate agents.

Monsoon weak across state; intermittent rain in south

BENGALURU, DHNS: The southwest monsoon prolonged its weak phase across Karnataka bringing spells of moderate to heavy rain in a few pockets of south and north interior Karnataka and at a few places in Malnad and coastal districts.

While most part of Malnad region is experiencing a prolonged dry spell, Madikeri and parts of Kodagu district continued to witness heavy showers intermittently. It trained heavily in the small hours of Saturday. After a break, heavy rains returned in the afternoon. Madikeri has been experiencing spells of heavy rains for the past three days.

Heavy rains lashed Male Mahadeshwara Hills in Chamarajanagar on Saturday. The sharp spell of rain brought some respite for residents and devotees from sweltering heat. Motorists were put to hardships due to waterlogged roads.

Ramanagar and parts of the district received showers late in the evening. The skies remained overcast throughout the day before opening up late evening. It poured for over one-and-a-half hours in Ramanagara which resulted in flooding of several roads and low-lying residential areas. The evening showers flooded the Bengaluru-Mysuru highway resulting in slow-moving traffic.

Rainfall lashed several places in Mandya and Mysuru districts on Saturday. Gowdagere and Besagarahalli in Mandya district recorded 64 mm and 63.5 mm of rain, respectively.

Up north, overnight showers choked roads in Ballari city. Rainwater gushed into the premises of the post office, causing grave hardship to the staff and the public. The underpasses at Satyanarayanapete, Nallacheravu and Durgamma Gudi were flooded prompting the motorists to seek alternative routes.

Overnight showers leave the premises of head post office in Ballari flooded, on Saturday. DH PHOTO

Cash-for-defection case: HC asks Speaker to reconsider prosecution sanction request

BENGALURU, DHNS: The High Court of Karnataka, citing the Apex Court order, said that in the absence of an authority competent to remove a member, the Speaker of the legislative assembly cannot refuse to consider the request for prosecution sanction sought under Section 19 (1) of the Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act.

Justice S Sunil Dutt Yadav observed this while disposing of a petition challenging the refusal to consider the prosecution sanction request pertaining to the allegation of bribes offered to a JD(S) MLA to switch over to the BJP.

The case pertains to the private complaint filed by T J Abraham, a social activist, regarding the public statement made by the then Kolar JD (S) MLA K Srinivas Gowda in 2019. He said that BJP legislators offered a Rs 30-crore bribe to switch over to the BJP.

Srinivas Gowda claimed to have told the then CM H D Kumaraswamy that he received an advance amount of Rs 5 crore from BJP leaders S R Vishwanath, C N Ashwath Narayan and C P Yogeshwar (currently a Congress MLA). He had also informed Kumaraswamy that the money had already been spent and to remain in the JD(S) he would have no other alternative but to return the money.

In 2020, Abraham filed a private complaint and in January 2022, the high court set aside the proceeding for want of sanction. Pursuant to this, Abraham approached the Speaker of the Assembly seeking a prosecution sanction. On April 25, 2022, the Deputy Secretary to the Speaker issued a communication stating that the Speaker is not the authority to appoint the elected representatives and hence, the question of granting sanction does not arise. Abraham challenged this communication before the High Court.

Justice Sunil Dutt Yadav cited the judgment of the five-judge bench of the Supreme Court in the P V Narasimha Rao case. The top court held that since there is no authority competent to remove a Member of Parliament and to grant sanction for prosecution under the PC Act, permission of the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha/ Speaker of the Lok Sabha, as the case may be, must be taken.

The court said that the Speaker has to reconsider and pass appropriate orders on the request of the complainant against five politicians.

RGUHS records pass percentage of 89.22; convocation on June 16

BENGALURU, DHNS

Spandana

Brinda

Prajwal

The daughter of an autorickshaw driver from Bengaluru has emerged as the topper of the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS), bagging three gold medals.

Spandhana I, a Bachelor of Physiotherapy graduate from Padmashree Institute of Physiotherapy, will receive the medals at the university's 28th annual convocation on June 16.

Her father, Indresh M, is an autorickshaw driver, while her mother, Girija, runs a provision store. The family, originally from Mandya, moved to Bengaluru in search of livelihood opportunities. Her elder sister is a software professional.

Expressing her happiness, Spandhana said she had not expected to become the overall topper. "I was hoping to get one gold medal, but never imagined I would receive three and emerge as the topper. I joined the course during the Covid period. Though I wanted to study medicine, my parents were reluctant, so I opted for physiotherapy. Today, I am happy with that decision because it allows me to help people, and awareness about physiotherapy is also increasing," she said.

"My family is my greatest strength, and the regular tests conducted by the college helped me perform better," she added. She is currently pursuing her master's degree at M S Ramaiah College.

Another topper, MBBS graduate Dr Prajwal, secured two gold medals and two cash awards.

"My interest in biology motivated me to pursue MBBS. I never studied with the intention of winning medals. From day one, I focused on understanding the subject well, and these awards are the outcome of that effort. My parents always supported my choices and never forced me into anything," he said.

A graduate of Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute, he plans to pursue postgraduate studies in General Medicine before choosing a super-speciality.

Dr Brinda, who secured two gold medals in Bachelor of Dental Sciences, said the achievement was unexpected. "I simply gave my best effort. Consistent hard work, patience and practical learning experiences played a key role in my success," she said.

A student of SJM Dental College and Hospital, Chitradurga, she plans to pursue higher studies and is awaiting counselling for admission to her master's programme.

Several other students also secured two gold medals. They include Dr Sanjana S Rao (AYUSH), A L N Rao Memorial Ayurvedic Medical College, Koppa; Dr Rodrigues Praneel Melvin (AYUSH), Alva's College of Naturopathy and Yogic Sciences, Moodbidri; Dr Kavana B K (Pharm D), Shri Siddaganga College of Pharmacy, Tumakuru; Annu Priya (B Pharm), Acharya and B M Reddy College of Pharmacy, Bengaluru; Trupti Shanmukh Naik (B Pharm), Srinivasa College of Pharmacy, Mangaluru; Vedika S (BPT), Kengal Hanumanthaiah Institute of Physiotherapy, Bengaluru; Kalyani Bajpeyee (Allied Health Sciences), Acharya Institute of Allied Health Sciences, Bengaluru; and Shruthika (Allied Health Sciences), A J Institute of Medical Sciences, Mangaluru.

Highest-ever pass percentage

RGUHS has recorded its highest-ever pass percentage this year at 89.22%. The pass percentage was 87.49% in 2025, 82.43% in 2024, 84.26% in 2023 and 82.25% in 2022.

Attributing the improvement to curriculum reforms, Vice-Chancellor Dr Bhagavan B C said, "We have implemented Competency-Based Education (CBE)."

Of the 72,741 eligible candidates, 62,419 are from undergraduate courses, 9,761 from postgraduate courses, 71 from PhD programmes, 211 from super-speciality courses, eight from postgraduate diploma programmes, 256 from fellowship courses and 15 from certificate courses. They will receive degrees and awards at the convocation to be held at the Dr Babu Rajendra Prasad International Convention Centre, GKVK Campus, Bengaluru.

Chief Minister D K Shivakumar will deliver the convocation address, while Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot will confer the degrees. Medical Education Minister Dr Sharan Prakash Patil will also be present.

Girls dominate medal tally

Girls have dominated the gold medal tally at this year's convocation. A total of 103 students will share 115 gold medals, of which 82 have been won by girls and 19 by boys.

Decision to fete Rajarajeshwari Medical College chairman raises questions

BENGALURU, DHNS: Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS) finds itself at the centre of a controversy triggered by its decision to award an honorary doctorate to A C Shanmugam, the chairman of Rajarajeshwari Medical College, the management of which is currently entangled in a legal dispute with the state government.

Given that the college and the state government are at loggerheads over the allocation of medical seats, the university's decision to fete Shanmugam at its 28th convocation ceremony has raised eyebrows.

A former syndicate member of RGUHS said, "There is a clear conflict of interest, given that the state government is engaged in a legal battle to get medical seats. How can the university, as an affiliate body, take such a decision?"

A member of the varsity's academic senate sought to know whether the decision to fete Shanmugam had been taken by the Governor's office. "If so, the Lok Bhavan must be intimated about the situation. The state has lost at least 450 medical seats from its pool because of this college," the member said.

Medical Education Minister Dr Sharan Prakash Patil too expressed his displeasure over the university's actions. "This has been brought to my notice. We have approached the court against the college, which has got a stay. The legal battle is ongoing. But the government has no say over the selection of those to be awarded honorary doctorates. A committee appointed by the governor is responsible," said Patil.

RGUHS Vice-Chancellor Dr Bhagavan B C said that the committee constituted by the governor had chosen the candidates for honorary doctorates. "We had no role to play in this, as the syndicate merely nominated a name for the committee as a university representative," he said.

Senior dentist Dr Nailady Sridhar Shetty and renowned paediatrician Harshangi Veerabhadrappa, are the others who will be awarded an honorary doctorate by RGUHS.

The case in question

Located off Mysuru Road, Rajarajeshwari Medical College was initially affiliated with RGUHS, with the medical seats at the institution contributing to the state's total pool of seats. However, in 2019, the college claimed it was affiliated to Dr MGR Educational and Research Institute (deemed to be a university) in Chennai, with the UGC approving the transfer of affiliation.

The Karnataka government challenged the decision in the High Court, which ruled in RGUHS's favour, and in 2022, the Centre withdrew the notification allowing for the transfer of affiliation. However, the college got a stay on that order, and continues to remain affiliated with the Dr MGR Educational and Research Institute.

PLEASE ALL, PLACATE ALL Young faces may get berths to inject vigour into ministry

Caste, regional balance key in run-up to Cabinet expansion

SUJAY B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

Chief Minister D K Shivakumar's first major challenge seems to be expanding his Cabinet, while maintaining caste and regional balance and ensuring the right blend of youth and experience.

On June 3, 12 Congress leaders joined the new ministry alongside Shivakumar and his deputy G Parameshwara.

Since the Cabinet can have a maximum of 34 ministers (15% of the strength of the 224-member legislative Assembly), 20 ministers are likely to be inducted in the next round.

The expansion is likely to be undertaken around June 20-25, after elections to 7 MLC posts on June 18.

According to sources, 50-60 contenders are vying for 20 spots. It's learnt that the Congress high command is keen on inducting more youngsters into the Cabinet.

Since 12 of the 14 ministers in the first batch (including Shivakumar) were ministers in the previous Siddaramaiah-led Cabinet, this round is likely to include several fresh faces.

Though first-time MLAs are unlikely to get berths, several two or three-time MLAs are lobbying to become debutant ministers.

Of the 14 ministers on board, three are from Scheduled Caste community (Parameshwara, Priyank Kharge and Muniyappa), three Lingayats (M B Patil, Eshwar Khandre and Sharan Prakash Patil), two Vokkaligas (Shivakumar and Krishna Byre Gowda), one from Reddy community (Ramalinga Reddy), two Kurubas (Byrathi Suresh and Yathindra Siddaramaiah), two minorities (K J George and U T Khader) and one from the Scheduled Tribe community (Satish Jarkiholi). Of this, only Yathindra — former CM Siddaramaiah's son — is a first-time minister.

It's widely expected that another 3-4 leaders each from SC, Lingayat and Vokkaliga communities may be included, while 4-5 OBCs and 2-3 minorities might also make the final cut.

Even within castes/religious communities, fair regional representation is being sought. For instance, if two spots are available for a community, one each from southern and northern Karnataka will likely be chosen.

Though both the OBC leaders in the Cabinet currently are Kurubas, supporters have sought representation for Kuruba leaders from north Karnataka, too.

At present, there are only two ministers from the Kittur Karnataka region (Jarkiholi and M B Patil). The upcoming round of expansion is likely to include more ministers from the region. Leaders like Laxmi Hebbalkar, Laxman Savadi, Saleem Ahmed, R B Timmapur from the Kittur Karnataka region are said to be in contention.

Khader is currently the lone minister from the coastal region, where Congress has negligible electoral presence.

A file photo of Chief Minister D K Shivakumar arriving at the Vidhana Soudha with Minister K H Muniyappa, after the swearing-in ceremony on June 3. The Cabinet expansion will be one of the major challenges before Shivakumar, catering to a number of aspirations and demands.

Seniors miffed?

While some senior ministers are disgruntled for not being included in the first list, others were reportedly upset with their portfolios.

Water Resources Minister Ramalinga Reddy initially resigned after being denied the Bengaluru development ministry. He claimed he had been promised the Bengaluru Development portfolio twice. However, after discussions, Reddy reconciled himself to water resources.

Greater Bengaluru Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda flew to Delhi to meet the high command after being reportedly upset over the decision that two key city departments —BDA and (BMRDA — would remain under Shivakumar.

Food & Civil Supplies Minister K H Muniyappa was also disgruntled, and is said to have sought deputy chief ministership.

Other leaders like H K Patil, Santosh Lad, Dr H C Mahadevappa, Dinesh Gundu Rao — ministers in the previous Cabinet — are reportedly unhappy on not being included in the Cabinet and are seeking opportunity again.

Chamarajpet strongman Zameer Ahmed Khan's situation seems dicey after allegations of anti-party activities surfaced against him during the Davangere south bypolls.

Speaker's post

With Khader's induction as Health and Family Welfare Minister, the speaker's position has fallen vacant. It's being speculated that H K Patil, Dinesh Gundu Rao and RV Deshpande are contenders for the Constitutional post.

Shivakumar is expected to push for his loyalists like Anekal MLA B Shivanna (SC), Magadi MLA H C Balakrishna (Vokkaliga) and so on. Other Vokkaliga leaders like T B Jayachandra, K M Shivalinge Gowda, M Krishnappa (Layout Krishnappa) and N Chaluvarayaswamy are also said to be contenders.

Though the exercise is complex and calls for careful political manoeuvering, Shivakumar will be compelled to do it soon, as a full-fledged Cabinet with properly defined portfolios is critical for effective administration.

KBG still awaiting clarity on 'full-fledged' portfolio to take charge

Attends CM's review meeting; 'it's not about power, but accountability'

BENGALURU, DHNS

After spending the last three days in Delhi seeking a "full-fledged" Bengaluru development portfolio, Krishna Byre Gowda on Saturday attended Chief Minister D K Shivakumar's review meeting at Vidhana Soudha, but avoided formally taking charge, insisting he needs "clarity" on his responsibilities.

Krishna Byre Gowda.

Byre Gowda told reporters that his concerns were not about power, but accountability.

"Let me say it clearly. I am not upset. The party and the chief minister have given me a tough responsibility by allotting the Bengaluru development portfolio. I don't consider it power, but responsibility. Bengaluru needs major reforms and the party and the people have huge expectations. To deliver results, the responsibility should be clearly defined and there should be clarity in the allocation of portfolio," he said.

When Shivakumar held the portfolio as deputy chief minister, it included the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) and Bangalore Metropolitan Region Development Authority (BMRDA). After he became CM, however, the portfolio was split, with the two agencies remaining under him.

"I held discussions with the CM and he has had meetings with the party leadership. The CM has assured me that the issue will be resolved in two days," he said.

Sworn in on June 3, Gowda was assigned the Greater Bengaluru Authority, the five city corporations under it, Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board and Bengaluru Metro

However, he argued that the city's key planning and infrastructure agencies must also come under him if he is to be held accountable for Bengaluru's transformation.

Sources said Gowda was handpicked by Rahul Gandhi to spearhead Bengaluru's development after experts told the Congress leadership that public perception of the government was closely linked to Bengaluru's growth and governance, making the city central to the party's political fortunes.

The former revenue minister, who was keen to continue in the revenue department to complete pending land-record digitisation reforms, was instead assigned Bengaluru development, albeit without BDA and BMRDA. He has questioned how accountability will work when major assets and projects remain outside his control, citing examples like outer ring road, BDA-managed lakes and major infrastructure projects.

However, Shivakumar is reluctant to part with the BDA, which is executing multi-crore projects like Hebbal tunnel road, Bengaluru business corridor and peripheral ring road, while BMRDA is slated to develop the proposed Bidadi township in his home district (Bengaluru south).

Jarkiholi leads ST delegation to CM, seeks quota restoration, more berths

BENGALURU, DHNS: Public Works minister Satish Jarkiholi on Saturday, led a delegation of Scheduled Tribe MLAs and pontiffs, to meet Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, pressing for restoration of the enhanced 7% reservation for the ST community and greater representation in the Cabinet and academia.

The previous BJP government had passed the SC and ST (Reservation of Seats in Educational Institutions and Appointments) Act, 2022, hiking the SC quota from 15% to 17% and the ST quota from 3% to 7%, breaching the Supreme Court's established 50% reservation limit. The Karnataka High Court put a cap on fresh recruitments under the expanded 56% quota based on a PIL.

The delegation comprising MLAs Basanagouda Daddal, Kampli Ganesh, Kudligi Srinivas and Raghumurthy, urged the government to engage senior advocates to pursue the legal battle for restoring the 7% enhanced ST quota. They also demanded that two more ministers from the ST community be inducted into the Shivakumar Cabinet.

Pointing to the lack of representation in higher education, the leaders said not a single vice chancellor in the state belongs to the ST community and sought steps to address the gap.

Congress currently holds 14 of the 15 ST reserved Assembly constituencies in Karnataka. The ST community earlier had three Cabinet berths. K N Rajanna and B Nagendra were dropped from the previous Siddaramaiah government. This time, Jarkiholi was one among the 13 ministers to be sworn in along with the chief minister. The next round of Cabinet expansion is likely to make it a full-fledged 34-member Cabinet.

Jarkiholi demanded that the community should be given two more berths.

Work as a team, strive for 'graft-free K'taka': CM to officials

Don't succumb to pressure from any quarter, DKS tells them

BENGALURU, DHNS:

Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Saturday exhorted government officers to work as "Team Karnataka" and strive towards building a "corruption-free Karnataka," stressing that people had high expectations from the government.

Addressing reporters after chairing a 7-hour review meeting with deputy commissioners, superintendents of police, chief executive officers of zilla panchayats, deputy conservators of forests and Cabinet colleagues, he said officials must function with discipline and integrity.

"All government employees should be in office by 10 am and attendance will be monitored centrally. Officers must display phone numbers and addresses on official websites and in their offices for people's convenience," he said.

The CM said he had directed officers not to succumb to pressure from any quarter.

"I have told them not to yield to pressure even from myself and not to do anything illegal. A helpline will be set up. Officers can directly contact me if they face undue pressure. We do not want a bad name for the government," he said.

Stressing decentralised governance, Shivakumar said district incharge ministers and deputy commissioners should regularly visit taluks and hold Jan Sampark meetings to ensure citizens don't need to travel to Bengaluru to get their work done. Referring to the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, he urged officials to guide booth-level officers and political party representatives to ensure that no eligible voter loses voting rights. He directed officials to facilitate the issuance of residence certificates wherever required, stating removal from voter list would deprive the voters of guarantee benefits and all other government facilities.

The chief minister reiterated plans to establish a private employment exchange to connect youth with opportunities in private sector.

He asked village accountants, PDOs and revenue officials to create awareness against fraudulent investment and Ponzi schemes. To improve mobility and reduce migration pressures on cities, Shivakumar said the government was preparing a long-term plan to develop ring roads around every town in a phased manner. He directed police stations to form dedicated squads to tackle rowdy elements and cyber crime.

Chief Minister D K Shivakumar chairs a review meeting with deputy commissioners, superintendents of police, chief executive officers of zilla panchayats and Cabinet colleagues in Bengaluru on Saturday.

Now, Gruha Jyoti beneficiaries under radar

After initiating a verification drive under Gruha Lakshmi scheme, the government is set to scrutinise beneficiaries of Gruha Jyoti scheme (free electricity to households).

Shivakumar said instances of misuse had come to the government's notice, including cases where a single electricity connection was being used to provide free power to multiple dwelling units and commercial establishments.

"We are providing zero electricity bills to all residential consumers under the scheme. We will now scrutinise beneficiaries and issue identity cards to ensure only eligible citizens of Karnataka avail the benefit," Shivakumar said.

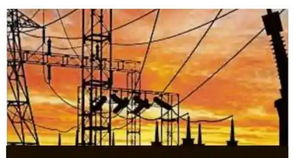
The CM said the government was purchasing power at rates as high as Rs 9 per unit and could not afford to extend subsidy to ineligible consumers.

He said meter readers, panchayat development officers (PDOs) and other local officials had been directed to undertake a fresh enrolment exercise.

New application forms carrying beneficiary's photograph will be issued and details will be verified before being updated in Gruha Jyoti database.

"The guarantee schemes are intended to support livelihoods of the needy. We have found instances of misuse and diversion," he said.

Power demand to rise by 40% in 5 years, state to hike capacity



IN A NUTSHELL

- Present demand: **One lakh million** units annually
- Expected demand by 2031: **1.4 lakh million** units annually
- Present capacity: **39 GW**
- Capacity to be added: **27 GW** (23 GW will be renewable energy)

SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

Karnataka is witnessing a surge in power consumption and according to an analysis by the energy department, the power demand in the state is expected to increase by nearly 40% in the next five years.

At present, Karnataka consumes close to one lakh million units annually and this may go up to 1.4 lakh million units by 2031. According to officials from the energy department, increasing electric vehicle (EV) adoption and booming data centres will drive the increase in demand. "Data centres require large amounts of power and this will drive the energy demand. That apart, EV adoption is also expected to grow. Industrialisation will also continue and these factors together will increase the power demand in the state significantly," a senior official from the energy department said.

To meet this increasing demand, the energy department has decided to increase its power production capacity by as much as 70%. At present, Karnataka has projects to the tune of 39 GW and plans to add 27 GW more by 2031.

"Of this 27 GW, 23 GW will come from renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and distributed RE projects. RE will be the focus going ahead. At about 10 GW of these new RE projects, battery energy storage systems (BESS) will also be installed to ensure that the RE produced can be stored and used," explained Gaurav Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary (Energy Department).

The remaining four GW will be augmented through traditional thermal power plants and hydro energy. Karnataka has also signed agreements with a few new thermal power plants and nuclear power plants to procure power by 2030-31. "Many projects are slated to be commissioned by 2029 or 2030," Gupta added.

No shortfall in fertiliser supply to K'taka: Joshi

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Amid reports of fertiliser shortage in parts of Karnataka, Union Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi on Saturday said that despite global supply chain disruptions in the wake of the West Asia conflict, the Centre has ensured adequate supply of fertilisers for the farmers of the state for the 2026 Kharif season.

Against a pro-rata requirement of 3.13 lakh metric tonnes (MT) of urea, supply of 5.59 lakh MT had been ensured, as on June 10, he said.

Ahead of Modi-Trump meet, US justifies attacks on ships

Modi-Trump meet,
From Page 3

Jason Meeks, the Chargé d'Affaires of the US embassy in New Delhi, was summoned to the Ministry of External Affairs on Wednesday and Friday when senior officials conveyed India's "deep concern" over the use of "lethal and deadly force" by the American Navy against civilian shipping near the Strait of Hormuz.

As Washington justified the US military actions against commercial vessels despite strong protests from New Delhi, it cast a shadow over the India-US bilateral relations ahead of the meeting between the leaders of the two nations on the sidelines of the G7 summit and the associated events to be hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron.

Washington on Saturday confirmed that the US president would hold a bilateral meeting with the prime minister of India at Évian-les-Bains in eastern France on Wednesday. The Modi-Trump bilateral meeting in France is going to be the second between the two leaders after Trump's return as the 47th US president in January 2025. Modi had met Trump at White House on February 13, 2025.

Trump's tariff war against India, his move to force India to stop buying oil from Russia, his repeated claims about mediating a truce between India and Pakistan, and his bonhomie with the civil-military leaders of Pakistan had put New Delhi's ties with Washington under strain.

Rubio recently visited India to iron out the wrinkles in the bilateral relations. He called on Modi and invited him, on behalf of the US president, for another visit to Washington later this year.

Anthropic halts Fable 5, Mythos 5 access on US order

Anthropic, From Page 3

Anthropic said it reviewed a demonstration of the specific technique and found it to be a "narrow, non-universal jailbreak" that essentially consists of asking the model to read a specific codebase and fix software flaws.

The company argued that this level of capability is widely available from other models, including OpenAI's GPT-5.5, and is routinely used by cybersecurity defenders.

"We disagree that the finding of a narrow potential jailbreak should be cause for recalling a commercial model deployed to hundreds of millions of people. If this standard was applied across the industry, we believe it would essentially halt all new model deployments for all frontier model providers," Anthropic said. The AI firm noted that perfect jailbreak resistance does not appear to be possible today and that it relies on a "defence in depth" strategy.

"This is also why Anthropic has required 30-day retention of customer data with Fable - a policy change that carries real costs for us with customers, but that allows us to research and mitigate jailbreaks."

Anthropic termed the government's action a "misunderstanding" and stated it is working to restore access as soon as possible. "We believe the government should have the ability to block unsafe deployments, as part of a statutory process that is transparent, fair, clear, and grounded in technical facts. This action does not adhere to those principles," the statement added.

POWER PLAY Ex-CM revisits 2022 showdown, reignites debate on leadership

Gehlot fights for his legacy as Cong eyes change in Rajasthan

SUMIT PANDE
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Ashok Gehlot is a man of few words. So, when he does speak, it's a sign that something is brewing in Rajasthan politics.

Last week, when the three-time chief minister of the desert state gave a long-winded statement in Jaipur without provocation, it was natural for friends and foes alike to sit up and take notice.

First, Gehlot clarified in great detail that he did not rebel against the Congress high command in 2022, when it had wanted him to take over as party president.

"If Sonia Gandhi offered, would I refuse? There was a conspiracy," he alleged, recalling the sequence of events when central observers Ajay Maken and Mallikarjun Kharge travelled to Jaipur in September, 2022.

The Congress Legislature Party was expected to pass a one-line resolution empowering the central leadership to choose a successor. Gehlot was drafted for a bigger role in Delhi. With him as the party's national president, the Congress wanted to project him as the Other Backward Classes (OBC) face to take on the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

As the state's second-longest-serving chief minister, Gehlot checked all the right boxes: Gandhi family loyalist who had worked with three generations of the Congress first family.

But that wasn't to be. In the Congress' history, this was perhaps one of the isolated incidents when central observers failed to get the state unit to toe the high command's diktats.

A rare public intervention by former chief minister Ashok Gehlot signals an attempt to repair ties with the Congress high command, and push back against Sachin Pilot's rise. PTI FILE

There was speculation that the Rajasthan strongman wanted to continue as CM even as the national president. Akin to the twin role that Narendra Modi assumed ahead of the 2014 Lok Sabha polls: Gujarat CM and BJP campaign committee chief. Others felt he just wanted to stay put in Jaipur.

Gehlot's loss was Kharge's gain; Kharge went on to become the national president while retaining the post of the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha. A year later, when the Congress came to power in Karnataka, it appointed Kharge's son, Priyank, to an important ministerial position.

Gehlot, however, stayed back in Jaipur to serve his remaining term as CM. The ties with Delhi had unmistakably soured.

The loss

At a conclave just ahead of a batch of Assembly polls slated for December 2023, Rahul Gandhi made an interesting observation. "I would say, right now, we are probably winning Telangana, we are certainly winning Madhya Pradesh, we are certainly winning Chhattisgarh. Rajasthan, we are very close, and we think we will be able to win," he said, raising eyebrows both within and outside the Congress.

And in December 2023, Gehlot lost. Since then, he has remained in the doghouse. Reports suggest that the Congress top brass has not entertained him much in the last three years. Gehlot, too, has lain low, hoping that the tide would turn sooner or later.

But politicians and fast bowlers don't forget and forgive easily. After the Kerala elections, now that the tide seems to be turning, the Congress has got down to putting its affairs in other states in order. Especially the ones that will see elections in the next couple of years.

In Karnataka, the party has been able to bring about a seamless transition of power from Siddaramaiah to DK Shivakumar. It is asserting its position vis-à-vis allies in seeking power-sharing in states and representation in the Rajya Sabha nominations.

In Rajasthan, too, there are signs that the Congress may effect a leadership change. Current state unit president Govind Singh Dotasara has been in office for six years, and one of the strong contenders for his replacement is Sachin Pilot, Gehlot's bete noire in Rajasthan politics.

The clawback attempt

Now we return to the second part of Gehlot's recent statement, where he sought to clarify his position on the 2022 incident to the high command.

"The MLAs were of the view that they would not accept Sachin Pilot as the chief minister because he was the one who tried to take the MLAs away," Gehlot said, raking up the July 2020 rebellion when 19 lawmakers seen to be close to Pilot camped at a Haryana resort seeking leadership change. Pilot was then the deputy CM and Rajasthan Congress president.

To save the government, Gehlot, too, shifted his MLAs to a resort. The high command intervened. Pilot was sacked both as deputy chief minister and state unit chief. He relented as Gehlot managed to retain power.

Six years later, in broaching the Pilot's rebellion, Gehlot seemed to be alluding to his continued reluctance to pass on the baton to the next generation, especially Pilot.

For someone who has remained the undisputed leader of the Congress in Rajasthan since 1998, when he first took over, Gehlot is well-entrenched.

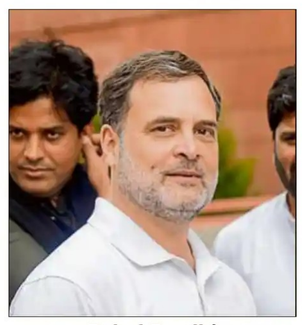
In 1998, he pipped stalwarts and Jat strongmen like Parasram Maderna to become the CM. In 2008, CP Joshi — the other contender for the CM's post — lost the Assembly elections by one vote.

In 2018, despite being the national general secretary, Gehlot managed to wriggle an Assembly ticket and emerge as the consensus choice.

But all these years, he had the Congress high command's backing. The 2022 episode seems to have altered that perception.

Rahul to hold student conventions on paper leaks, jobs

NEW DELHI, DHNS



Rahul Gandhi

The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, will conduct four student conventions next month, starting June 17 in Kota, the country's entrance coaching hub, as part of Congress's nationwide campaign against the Modi government over "systematic betrayal" of the youth.

The party will also seek a "comprehensive" debate in Parliament on the crisis confronting India's youth and advocate legislative measures to protect their interests, rights and future.

The campaign will articulate Rahul's demands, including decentralisation of NEET, abolition of examination fees, strict action against those involved in paper-leak rackets, and accountability at the highest levels of government, including the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

The conventions will start with Kota, followed by Allahabad on July 10, Patna on July 11 and Delhi on July 14.

Announcing the first phase of the nationwide campaign, Congress General Secretary (Organisation) KC Venugopal said the campaign will focus on the "growing crisis" of paper leaks, examination irregularities, unemployment and the "systematic betrayal" of youth by the Modi government.

"The campaign will highlight the hardships faced by millions of young Indians whose futures are being repeatedly jeopardised by paper leaks, rising examination costs and the government's failure to ensure a fair and transparent recruitment and education system," he said.

As part of the campaign, he said the party will reiterate Rahul's call to mobilise students through extensive outreach by NSU(I), Youth Congress and state, district and local units across the country.

Rahul faces CPM ire over remark to 'hug' Pinarayi Vijayan

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Rahul Gandhi's remark that he "cannot and will not" hug former Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan has miffed top CPM leaders, who are questioning the Congress leader's attitude towards the I.N.D.I.A bloc allies.

On Saturday, CPM General Secretary MA Baby hit back at Rahul.

"Nobody is asking Rahul Gandhi to hug Pinarayi Vijayan. On the contrary, all that we are asking is that he stop being a facilitator for the ED and the Modi government by demanding the arrest of Pinarayi Vijayan and other opposition leaders. That is not the job of the Leader of the Opposition," he said on 'X'.

Vijayan also hit back, saying, "Whenever we meet, we shake hands but never hug. But today I saw a photo of Rahul Gandhi hugging Narendra Modi. I don't have an issue with him doing so, but it shows how Rahul views the I.N.D.I.A bloc. It was because of his attitude, particularly, that DMK is out of the bloc."

BJP inches towards 2/3rd majority in RS

Trinamool MPs' support takes it closer to mark in LS

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The BJP's quest for numerical supremacy in Parliament to avoid instances of failing to amend the Constitution may be a long road in the Lok Sabha, while it is cruising towards a two-third majority in the Rajya Sabha, aided by defections from rivals.

At least 20 Trinamool Congress (TMC) Lok Sabha members have severed their ties with the party and indicated their support to the BJP-led NDA, while three Rajya Sabha members from the Mamata Banerjee-led outfit have quit the Upper House in recent days.

The BJP-led NDA has the support of 294 MPs, including Speaker Om Birla and an independent, in the Lok Sabha, but now boasts of 314 MPs' support, counting the rebel TMC lawmakers.

At present, there are three vacancies in the 543-member Lok Sabha, which means the number for a two-third majority is 360, with the ruling BJP requiring another 47 to touch the mark. The BJP's attempt comes following the West Bengal result as well as rumblings in the I.N.D.I.A bloc with the DMK's exit. There are speculations that BJP may also eye the nine-member Shiv Sena (UBT) and the eight-member NCP(SP).

However, the Congress believes that Home Minister Amit Shah's "evil designs" must not and "will not succeed", with its general secretary Jairam Ramesh recalling that the "self-styled Chanakya" was "humiliated" when the NDA was "convincingly rejected" in the Lok Sabha on April 17, when it tried to pass the "dangerous" Constitution Amendment Bill dealing with delimitation.

"Never before has anybody tried to engineer a two-thirds majority for his party in the Lok Sabha as the home minister is desperately doing these days in the run-up to the Monsoon session of Parliament. He is now busy breaking Opposition parties and making a complete mockery of democracy," he said.

In the Rajya Sabha, the NDA numbers would go up to 152 from 148 if an independent candidate fielded in Jharkhand wins. It could go up to 155, eight short of a two-third majority, as BJP can win three seats in West Bengal vacated by TMC MPs.

Parliament in numbers

LOK SABHA 362 for two-third majority in a House of 543

NDA: From 294 to 314, with at least 20 Trinamool Congress MPs shifting sides	**Major parties:** BJP-240 (includes Speaker); TDP-16; JD(U)-12; TMC rebels-20
I.N.D.I.A: From 237 to 191 – with exit of DMK, AAP, and rebel TMC MPs	**Major parties:** Congress-98; SP-37; TMC-8; SS(UBT)-9; NCP(SP)-8
OTHERS: At least 29 of 35 to support Opposition	**Major parties:** DMK-22; YSR Congress-4; AAP-3

There are speculations about future movement of SS (UBT) and NCP(SP) MPs

TMC rejig as rebel camp gets stronger

KOLKATA, PTI

Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee has initiated structural overhauling of the party that faced a new crisis on Saturday with senior MP Sudip Bandyopadhyay allegedly joining the rebel camp.

Banerjee removed Jadavpur MP Saayoni Ghosh from the position of youth wing president and replaced her with Arnab Banerjee, a youth leader, party sources said.

The rebel-torn party, which is facing an existential crisis, also replaced Kolkata Dakshin MP Mala Roy with Alifa Ahmed, TMC MLA from Kaliganj in Nadia district, as the president of its women's wing, the Trinamool Mahila Congress.

Both Ghosh and Roy are perceived to have joined the band of TMC's rebel MPs in the Lok Sabha amid a major turmoil currently rocking the party, with the dissidents stating they would meet Speaker Om Birla on Monday with a letter to seek recognition as the "real TMC", following the party's electoral drubbing in the 2026 West Bengal Assembly elections.

Sudip Bandyopadhyay, one of the party's founding members, allegedly joined the rebel camp. PTI FILE

With Bandyopadhyay's shift, leaders of the breakaway faction claimed that 20 of the party's 28 Lok Sabha members were already signatories to the said letter, including Ghosh and Roy.

Dissident MP Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar has declared that the bloc, once recognised, would offer support to the BJP-led NDA in Parliament.

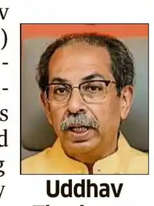
Following a mutiny by the party's legislators in the state assembly, Banerjee had reconstituted the TMC's organisational committee on June 5 — after dissolving all its former committees and frontal organisations across Bengal — packing the new leadership structure with party loyalists and old-timers in an apparent bid to revitalise the embattled party, where she, ironically, named both Ghosh and Roy for their respective posts.

She had reappointed the party's Diamond Harbour MP and her nephew, Abhishek Banerjee, as its national general secretary. "These replacement decisions were already taken at a party meeting held three days ago," a senior Rajya Sabha MP of the TMC said.

Meanwhile, TMC's Beleghata MP Kunal Ghosh was named the president of the party's North Kolkata organisational district, a position earlier held by Bandyopadhyay.

Amid defection buzz, Uddhav calls MPs' meeting today

MUMBAI, DHNS: Amid Operation Tiger looming large, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray has summoned a meeting of all party MPs at Matoshree, the Thackeray family's Bandra residence, on Sunday.



Uddhav Thackeray

The recent developments involving the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress — where reports of internal dissent and revolting MPs have surfaced — have added to concerns within Opposition ranks and rattled the Thackeray camp.

The Sunday meeting is viewed as a crucial exercise to assess loyalty and organisational cohesion within the Shiv Sena (UBT). The development comes against the backdrop of persistent speculation that some Shiv Sena (UBT) Lok Sabha MPs have been in touch with Deputy CM Eknath Shinde.

2027 polls: Mayawati to launch BSP campaign on June 22

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

BSP supremo Mayawati will launch her party's election campaign from Ayodhya with a public meeting on June 22.

According to BSP sources, she will address another public meeting in the neighbouring Ambedkar Nagar district the next day.

BSP chief Mayawati

"The party has lined up a series of rallies in different parts of the state in the next few months in the run-up to the next Assembly polls due in 2027," a party leader here said on Saturday.

The choice of Ayodhya to launch BSP's election campaign was significant as the constituency, besides having the Ram Temple, has a large number of Dalit voters, who played a key role in Samajwadi Party's Dalit nominee Awadhesh Prasad's victory in the 2024 Lok Sabha election. BSP was relegated to the third spot after BJP. Ambedkar Nagar also has a substantial number of OBC voters.

Sources said the party has instructed its senior leaders to ensure the presence of a large number of people in both rallies. State BSP chief Vishwanath Pal has been entrusted with mobilising crowds. They also said BSP plans to announce the names of candidates for several seats this month.

Mayawati, who has made it clear that BSP will go solo in the 2027 UP Assembly polls, wants to ensure that it will be three-cornered, and she is the "kingmaker".

BSP's vote share has been declining with every election in the past decade. In the 2022 Assembly polls, BSP's performance hit a nadir as it won only one seat with a vote share of 12.8%.

POLICY OVERHAUL

Centre expands mandatory public interest content in TV, radio rules

NEW DELHI, PTI

The Centre has proposed a single regulatory framework for television and radio broadcasting services, extending the obligation of airing programmes on "themes of national importance and social relevance" from TV channels to private radio services.

The draft Telecommunications (Television, Radio and Associated Services) Rules, 2026, made public by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on Friday, state that while TV channels "shall" broadcast content on these themes for a minimum of 30 minutes daily between 6 am and 11 pm, radio stations will have to dedicate one hour for the same purpose every day.

While airing of such content was made obligatory for TV four years ago under the 'Guidelines for Uplinking and Downlinking of Television Channels in India, 2022', no time slot was specified in the rules. The draft seeks to address that gap.

Also, under the FM Policy Phase-III, private radio stations were so far required to broadcast "public interest announcements" for one hour every day "as may be required by the Central government/state government".

The draft rules, however, state that every authorised private radio service shall "broadcast programmes focusing on themes of national importance and social relevance, in such manner as the Central government may specify, for a minimum duration of one hour per day", making the potential nature of the public interest announcements clearer.

Moreover, while the current guidelines state that TV channels "may undertake public service broadcasting", the draft seeks to change it to "shall", making the obligation more airtight.

The suggested themes of content – education and spread of literacy; agriculture and rural development; health and family welfare; science and technology; women's welfare, among others – in the existing rules have been retained in the draft.

The obligation will exempt certain categories where compliance may not be feasible, the draft says.

Channels uplinked from India exclusively for foreign audience will not be covered, subject to government clearances and ensuring that content does not affect India's sovereignty, integrity, national security or foreign relations, it says.

Assam tightens Aadhaar rules to curb illegal immigration

GUWAHATI, PTI: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday said his cabinet has decided that Aadhaar cards would not be issued to those aged over 18 years to ensure illegal immigrants don't acquire the document.

In exceptional cases, the district commissioner will have to send a proposal to the state government seeking permission for issuing the card, he said at a press conference here after chairing a cabinet meeting.

The government will then decide whether the applicant is eligible for the card, the chief minister said.

Remarking that Aadhaar card issuance has reached a saturation point in the state, Sarma said, "In some districts, it has crossed the 100% mark, and we must ascertain who these people are who are taking the additional Aadhaar cards."

The step is being taken to ensure that no illegal Bangladeshis get Aadhaar cards, he said.

No bar for SC, ST

Himanta Biswa Sarma

Aadhaar cards will, however, continue to be issued to people from the Tea Tribe community, the Scheduled Tribes, the Scheduled Castes and the differently abled, as many are yet to receive the cards.

"The ban will, however, be absolute from April 1, 2027, and people from these communities above the age of 18 will also stop receiving it from that date," the CM said.

Aadhaar cards, however, will continue to be issued to those below the age of 18.

Sarma had earlier said the state government would be "very strict" in issuing Aadhaar cards, and it would not be easy to get the document in Assam.

Supriya Sule dismisses NCP (SP) merger talks with Cong

MUMBAI, DHNS: Amid growing political speculation over a possible merger of opposition parties with the Congress, NCP (SP) working president Supriya Sule on Saturday categorically dismissed reports suggesting that the party was considering such a move.

"We do not know anything about it. Neither Pawar Saheb knows anything about it, nor do I...," Sule told reporters in Nagpur.

"In our party, no one has made any proposal, and no one has given us any proposal. Neither have we made any proposal, nor have they," she said, rejecting speculation about merger talks.

India tests ballistic missile defence system, joins elite group

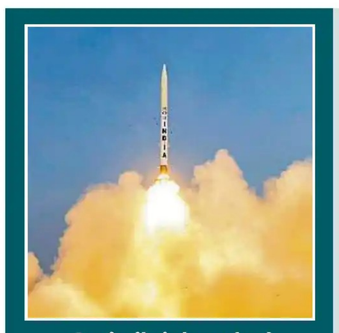
Three back-to-back DRDO trials demonstrate ability to intercept long-range missiles

KALYAN RAY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

India has successfully completed the development trials of a ballistic missile defence system, joining a handful of nations with such a shield to intercept incoming missiles.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) carried out three back-to-back tests earlier this week to check the shield's ability to neutralise enemy missiles within the atmosphere and on the edge of the atmosphere. Further, the maiden flight test of a naval anti-ship missile, medium range, was carried out successfully.

"Three consecutive flight tests were conducted on June 10 and 11 to demonstrate multi-layered defence against long-range ballistic missiles and anti-ship capability at medium range," the Defence Ministry said.



A missile is launched during a flight test conducted by the DRDO. PTI

Missile MIGHT

- Tests show shield's ability to neutralise enemy missiles within atmosphere and at the edge of atmosphere

SOURCES SAY DRDO WILL NOW DEVELOP MORE ADVANCED VERSIONS OF INTERCEPTORS, RADARS

- Currently, the USA, Russia, China and Israel have BMD capabilities

"These tests have put the country in the elite group of nations having Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) capability to engage up to intercontinental ballistic missiles."

The trials, sources said, marked the culmination of the first phase of developing the BMD capability, as DRDO will now move to developing more advanced versions of interceptors and radars.

"Multi-layered Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) capability was successfully demonstrated. The interceptors successfully engaged their respective targets. The systems are designed and developed with the latest technologies to address the emerging missile threats," Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said in a post.

The minister said these tests put India in the "elite group" of nations having BMD capabilities to engage missiles, including intercontinental ballistic missiles. The USA, Russia, China and Israel are other nations having such a capability at the moment.

The maiden flight test of the naval anti-ship missile, medium range, was also carried out successfully.

Faced with growing missile threats, India began its BMD programme in 2000, aiming to develop two types of tackles for the enemy missiles at end-atmospheric and exo-atmospheric conditions. The radar and associated electronics were initially procured from Israel but later were developed in India.

India's BMD was planned as a double-layered system consisting of land and sea-based interceptor missiles: the first layer named Prithvi Air Defence and the second layer named Advanced Air Defence.

The PAD is used for high-altitude interceptions, and the AAD takes care of low-altitude interceptions. Both layers are supported by a range of tracking stations, radars, and command and control posts.

Fuel price relief for India, but not other countries

AJITH ATHRADY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Saturday that fuel prices in India saw a net decline of 3.1% between May 2022 and May 2026, even as prices rose significantly in several other countries.

Speaking to reporters in Ludhiana, Puri said international oil prices increased amid the Iran conflict.

"In India, prices dropped by 3.1% during this period," Puri said.

He attributed the relatively stable or lower prices to reductions in central excise duty implemented by the government in November 2021, May 2022, and more recently. Here, the minister mentioned a recent cut of Rs 10 per litre in excise duty on petrol and diesel, which resulted in a budgetary impact of about Rs 1 lakh crore.

He contrasted this with a cumulative price increase of Rs 7.60 per litre at one point, noting that India, along with Japan, saw among the lowest rises in fuel prices globally.

On the decision to cap daily diesel sales at 200 litres, the minister said it was aimed at preventing black marketing.

Puri added that the country holds comfortable reserves, with crude oil and natural gas stocks covering over 60 days.

For LPG, domestic production has increased from 32,000 metric tonnes to 54,000 metric tonnes per day, reducing reliance on imports.

NTA clarifies on marks normalisation for CUET-PG

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The National Testing Agency (NTA) on Saturday said marks of students who appeared for rescheduled exams of the CUET-PG entrance were not normalised.

Over 565 students from Meghalaya had to sit for the rescheduled exams due to unrest in Tura when the first exam took place.

In a statement, the exam body said it was responding to queries on social media about some CUET (PG) 2026 subjects being held on more than one date, and about normalisation not being applied.

"In March 2026, due to the law-and-order disruption at Tura (Meghalaya), and the security situation at certain overseas centres, 565 candidates across 28 subjects could not appear on their originally scheduled dates, for reasons entirely beyond their control. Accordingly, NTA rescheduled the examination for these 565 candidates only on 29th and 30th March 2026, purely as a welfare measure," the statement read.

'Report absolute marks'

It further said that for CUET-PG, its policy is to report absolute marks for every candidate in every subject.

"No candidate's score is normalised – not in the main examination, not in the reschedule. There was therefore nothing the rescheduled candidates were exempted from; they were scored on exactly the same basis as everyone else," the statement further read.

Normalising of scores means standardisation of marks in large-scale exams where question papers vary as per shifts. Marks are allotted to a candidate relative to everyone who sat for the exams.

NTA reasoned that normalisation across these two varied groups will be statistically meaningless due to the scale. "A cohort of a hundred cannot be statistically normalised against tens of thousands," it said.

UP govt forms SIT to probe Ram Temple donation row

3-member team to submit final report in a fortnight

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

The Uttar Pradesh government on Saturday formed a special investigation team (SIT) to probe the alleged embezzlement worth crores at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

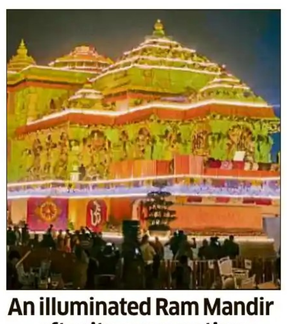
The decision comes amid backlash from the opposition and demands by some BJP leaders and seers.

The three-member SIT would submit an interim report within a week and a final report in a fortnight, according to official sources here.

The special investigation team comprises special secretary of finance Neel Ratan, Lucknow commissioner Vijay Vishwas Pant and IG range, Lucknow Kiran S.

Sources said the SIT was likely to reach Ayodhya on Sunday.

It was also likely to quiz the detained suspects and other persons associated with the counting of the offerings and take into possession the documents and evidence gathered so far.



An illuminated Ram Mandir after its consecration ceremony in Ayodhya. PTI FILE

Trust requested for SIT

The decision came hours after the Ram Temple Trust requested Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to form an SIT.

The Trust wants SIT to also probe the circumstances under which crores of rupees in offerings were embezzled despite the presence of security personnel and find out the perpetrators.

The SIT would also investigate the efficacy of the security system, including the CCTV, and the role of the checking staff.

Meanwhile, a police team raided the residence of one Luvkush Mishra in Meenapur Thakuran Fagauli village in Ayodhya district on Friday and allegedly recovered around Rs 12 lakh.

Mishra was reportedly one of the staff responsible for counting of cash offerings at the Temple. He was a car mechanic before being employed by the Trust. He has constructed a house on a plot in Faizabad that he bought recently, reports said.

Seers demanded probe

Earlier, senior BJP leaders and seers had demanded a probe into the matter.

Former MP from Ayodhya, Vinay Katiyar, has demanded an independent probe into the matter saying the issue concerned the faith of millions of devotees.

"An impartial and transparent inquiry must be conducted to ascertain the truth," Ayodhya-based seer Mahant Kamal Nayan Das said.

Lt Gen Dhiraj Seth is next Army chief

NEW DELHI, DHNS

Lt Gen Dhiraj Seth on Saturday was appointed the next Chief of the Army Staff. He will take over from Gen Upendra Dwivedi on June 30.

Currently the Vice Chief of the Army Staff, Lt Gen Seth is the first officer in three decades from the Armoured Corps to become the Army chief.

In appointing Lt Gen Seth, the government followed the seniority principle.

"The government has appointed Lt Gen Dhiraj Seth, currently serving as the Vice-Chief of the Army Staff, as the next Chief of the Army Staff with effect from the afternoon of June 30," the Defence Ministry said.

Commissioned in 1986, he has extensive experience across the operational, strategic, capability development, and institutional domains.

Lt Gen Seth has had the rare distinction of commanding two operational Army Commands and a Strike Corps. On elevation to Army Commander, he commanded the South Western Command and Southern Command, providing strategic oversight across critical theatres for two and a half years, the Defence Ministry said.

His command assignments include an Armoured Regiment in the Desert Sector, an Armoured Brigade in the Western Theatre, and a Counter-Insurgency Force in Jammu & Kashmir.

As lieutenant general, he commanded the Sudarshan Chakra Corps (21 Corps), one of the Indian Army's premier strike formations.

He subsequently served as General Officer Commanding, Delhi Area, overseeing key national and international military engagements and ceremonial responsibilities.

Widely recognised for his contributions to force modernisation, Lt Gen Seth has held pivotal appointments in the Strategic Planning and Capability Development verticals of the Army Headquarters, shaping its modernisation trajectory, capability roadmap and long-term force structuring initiatives.

His contributions, according to the ministry, have been instrumental in aligning operational requirements with emerging technologies and future battlefield imperatives.

The last time an Armoured Corps officer became the Indian Army Chief was three decades ago, when Gen Shankar Roychowdhary assumed the top post after the untimely death of Gen B C Joshi, who was also from the Armoured Corps.

Lieutenant General Dhiraj Seth, Vice Chief of the Army Staff. PTI

On THE TOP

- Lt Gen Dhiraj Seth is **recognised for his strategic planning** and contributions to Army modernisation
- He will **assume charge on June 30** when Gen Dwivedi retires
- He **commanded the Sudarshan Chakra Corps**, a top strike formation of the Indian Army
- He is **currently serving** as the Vice Chief of the force

Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam move fresh bail pleas in 2020 Delhi riots case

NEW DELHI, PTI: Activists Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam have moved fresh bail applications before a court here in the larger conspiracy case related to the 2020 Northeast Delhi riots, contending that their continued incarceration without commencement of trial violated their fundamental right to liberty.

Khalid's plea also argued that even as his earlier application was rejected by the apex court, subsequent judicial developments constituted a "change in circumstances". He referred to the court's remarks in May in another case, asserting that "bail is the rule..." even under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

Umar Khalid

Sharjeel Imam

The fresh pleas were filed before the Additional Sessions Judge Sumedh Saini after the Supreme Court on January 5 refused them bail in the case registered under UAPA.

The Delhi court has sought a response from the Delhi Police on both the pleas and listed the matter for hearing on July 4.

In his application, Imam said there had been no "significant development" in the proceedings even six months after the SC judgment denying him bail and that he had remained in custody for nearly six years. It said charges were yet to be framed in the case despite prolonged incarceration of the accused. Khalid's plea said the trial was unlikely to commence in the near future considering the large number of accused, witnesses and documents relied upon by the prosecution.

Woman jumps to death from 6th floor with baby; infant survives

HYDERABAD, PTI: A woman techie has allegedly died by jumping from the sixth floor of an apartment here, carrying her six-month-old baby, who survived miraculously, police said.

Esha Sahu (37) took the extreme step on Friday due to depression, they added.

Her baby daughter survived the fall as she landed on the cables of a solar fence of the apartment boundary wall, police said.

Esha was from Madhya Pradesh and was employed in the software sector. Her husband, who is also from the same state, works in the software industry too.

The baby was admitted to a hospital after recovery, and her condition was out of danger, police said on Saturday.

The woman sent her husband to a shop before taking the extreme step, police said.

"Before her husband returned, she jumped from the top of the apartment with her baby. The baby survived as she landed on the cables and was hanging," police said.

The couple have been married for 13 years. The woman was said to be suffering from depression since the birth of her daughter six months ago, the police said.

Tata iPhone plant pollutes farmland water: Tamil Nadu pollution board

BENGALURU, REUTERS

The Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) has alleged that wastewater discharged from a Tata factory that manufactures components for Apple's iPhone has contaminated the groundwater for nearby farms, and warned of a forced shutdown unless Tata gives a satisfactory explanation.

Tata Electronics is central to Apple's push to diversify iPhone production beyond China, and is the second-biggest supplier to Apple in South Asia after Taiwan's Foxconn.

The Tata plant under investigation is in Hosur in Tamil Nadu, and makes back panels and other components for iPhones.

Farmland owners near the plant had complained for months to the state pollution control board that wastewater from the factory was contaminating their land and open wells.

The complaints led to five state inspections between December 2025 and May 2026, according to details from a previously unreported regulatory notice dated May 25 and reviewed by Reuters.

Vehicles pass through the security check at the entrance of a Tata Electronics plant which makes Apple iPhone components in Hosur.

The inspections found that Tata discharged wastewater into a rainwater harvesting pond inside its facility and that the pond overflowed to contaminate "groundwater in the open wells located in the adjacent agricultural lands", the TNPCB's warning notice to Tata said.

Tata had not taken any corrective actions on instructions issued by the pollution board in a previous letter dated December 23, 2025, it said in the three-page notice.

Tata Electronics told Reuters in a statement that it had commissioned an independent analysis through an accredited laboratory, and that the study determined that the company was "in full compliance with all regulatory norms".

Tata said it was "committed to responsible business practices and protection of the environment and local communities", and that it had responded to pollution authorities, although giving no further details.

The pollution board, in its May notice, asked Tata to explain why power to the unit should not be cut and the unit closed for its alleged breach of the rules.

Apple, which has strict rules on how its suppliers handle wastewater, and the Tamil Nadu government did not respond to requests for comment from Reuters.

ಶಿವಮೊಗ್ಗ, ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ ಮತ್ತು ಚಿತ್ರದುರ್ಗ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಸಹಕಾರ ಹಾಲು ಉತ್ಪಾದಕರ ಸಂಘಗಳ ಒಕ್ಕೂಟ ನಿ., ಮಾಚೇನಹಳ್ಳಿ, ನಿದಿಗೆ (ಅಂಚೆ), ಶಿವಮೊಗ್ಗ–577 222

ದೂರವಾಣಿ: 08182–246161, 246162
E-mail: md_shimul@yahoo.com, shimuladmn@gmail.com Website: www.shimul.coop
ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:ಶಿಮುಲ್/ಆಡಳಿತ–1/ನೇ.ನೇ–370/1612/2026–27 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 12.06.2026

ಪರಿಷ್ಕೃತ ನೇಮಕಾತಿ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಶಿವಮೊಗ್ಗ, ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ ಮತ್ತು ಚಿತ್ರದುರ್ಗ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಸಹಕಾರ ಹಾಲು ಉತ್ಪಾದಕರ ಸಂಘಗಳ ಒಕ್ಕೂಟ ನಿ., (ಶಿಮುಲ್) ಶಿವಮೊಗ್ಗ ಇದರಲ್ಲಿ ಖಾಲಿ ಇರುವ ವಿವಿಧ ವೃಂದಗಳಲ್ಲಿನ ಒಟ್ಟು 194 ಹುದ್ದೆಗಳ ನೇಮಕಾತಿಗಾಗಿ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಿ ಹೊರಡಿಸಲಾಗಿರುವ ನೇಮಕಾತಿ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:ಶಿಮುಲ್/ಆಡಳಿತ–1/ನೇ.ನೇ–370/4438/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 14.11.2025 ಮತ್ತು ಕಾಲಾವಧಿ ವಿಸ್ತರಣೆ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:ಶಿಮುಲ್/ಆಡಳಿತ–1/ನೇ.ನೇ–370/6198/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 05.02.2026 ಗಳನ್ನು ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಆದೇಶ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 27.04.2026 ಮತ್ತು 08.05.2026 ರನ್ವಯ ಹಿಂಪಡೆದು ಈ ಕೆಳಕಂಡಂತೆ ಪರಿಷ್ಕೃತ ನೇಮಕಾತಿ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಹೊರಡಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ಜಾರಿಯಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಆದೇಶದನ್ವಯ ರೋಸ್ಟರ್ ಬಿಂದು ಮತ್ತು ಒಳ ಮೀಸಲಾತಿಯನ್ನು ಅಳವಡಿಸಿಕೊಂಡು ಒಕ್ಕೂಟದಲ್ಲಿ ಖಾಲಿ ಇರುವ ಈ ಕೆಳಕಂಡ ವಿವಿಧ ವೃಂದಗಳಲ್ಲಿನ ಒಟ್ಟು 194 ಹುದ್ದೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಅರ್ಹ ಅಭ್ಯರ್ಥಿಗಳಿಂದ ಅರ್ಜಿಗಳನ್ನು ಆನ್‌ಲೈನ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಆದೇಶ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: ಸಿ�ఒ 147 ಸಿಸಿಬಿ 2022 ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ದಿನಾಂಕ: 12.10.2022 ರಲ್ಲಿ ಅನುಮೋದಿಸಿದಂತೆ ನೇಮಕಾತಿಗೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದ ಮೀಸಲಾತಿ ವರ್ಗೀಕರಣ, ಒಳ ಮೀಸಲಾತಿ, ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಹತೆ ಮತ್ತು ಅನುಭವ, ವಯೋಮಿತಿ, ಅರ್ಜಿ ಶುಲ್ಕ, ಆಯ್ಕೆ ವಿಧಾನ, ಅರ್ಜಿ ನಮೂನೆ, ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಬೇಕಾದ ದಾಖಲೆಗಳು ಮತ್ತು ಅರ್ಜಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವ ವಿಧಾನ ಇತ್ಯಾದಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ಒಕ್ಕೂಟದ ಅಧಿಕೃತ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್ www.shimul.coop ರಲ್ಲಿ ನೀಡಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಹುದ್ದೆಗಳ ವಿವರ ಈ ಕೆಳಕಂಡಂತಿರುತ್ತದೆ.

ಕ್ರ.ಸಂ.	ಭರ್ತಿ ಮಾಡಲಿರುವ ಹುದ್ದೆಗಳ ವಿವರ	ವೇತನ ಶ್ರೇಣಿ (ರೂ. ಗಳಲ್ಲಿ)	ಹುದ್ದೆಗಳ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ
1	ಸಹಾಯಕ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕರು (ಎಹೆಚ್/ಎಐ)	83700–155200	17
2	ಸಹಾಯಕ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕರು (ಆಡಳಿತ)	83700–155200	01
3	ಸಹಾಯಕ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕರು (ಎಫ್ ಅಂಡ್ ಎಫ್)	83700–155200	03
4	ಎಂಐಎಸ್ / ಸಿಸ್ಟಂ ಆಫೀಸರ್	69250–134200	01
5	ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿ	69250–134200	02
6	ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿ (ಅಭಿಯಂತರ)	69250–134200	02
7	ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿ (ಗುಣನಿಯಂತ್ರಣ)	69250–134200	02
8	ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿ (ಡಿಟಿ)	69250–134200	14
9	ಕೆಮಿಸ್ಟ್ ದರ್ಜೆ–1	54175–99400	04
10	ವಿಸ್ತರಣಾಧಿಕಾರಿ ದರ್ಜೆ–3	54175–99400	17
11	ಆಡಳಿತ ಸಹಾಯಕ ದರ್ಜೆ–2	44425–83700	17
12	ಲೆಕ್ಕ ಸಹಾಯಕ ದರ್ಜೆ–2	44425–83700	12
13	ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆ ಸಹಾಯಕ ದರ್ಜೆ–2	44425–83700	10
14	ಕೆಮಿಸ್ಟ್ ದರ್ಜೆ–2	44425–83700	28
15	ಕಿರಿಯ ಸಿಸ್ಟಂ ಆಪರೇಟರ್	44425–83700	13
16	ಶೀಘ್ರಲಿಪಿಗಾರರು ದರ್ಜೆ–2	44425–83700	01
17	ಕಿರಿಯ ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕರು	34100–67600	50
	ಒಟ್ಟು ಹುದ್ದೆಗಳ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ		194

ಆನ್‌ಲೈನ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 14.06.2026 ರಿಂದ 14.07.2026 ರವರೆಗೆ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಬಹುದಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ. ಈ ಕುರಿತು ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಗಳು ಶಿಮುಲ್ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್ www.shimul.coop ರಲ್ಲಿ ಲಭ್ಯವಿದ್ದು, ಆಸಕ್ತಿಯುಳ್ಳ ಅಭ್ಯರ್ಥಿಗಳು ಒಕ್ಕೂಟದ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್‌ಗೆ ಭೇಟಿ ನೀಡಿ ಆನ್‌ಲೈನ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸತಕ್ಕದ್ದು ಹಾಗೂ ನಿಗದಿತ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಶುಲ್ಕವನ್ನು ಆನ್‌ಲೈನ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರವೇ ಪಾವತಿಸತಕ್ಕದ್ದು.

ಈಗಾಗಲೇ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 14.11.2025 ಮತ್ತು 05.02.2026 ರ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆಗಳಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪಾವತಿಸಿರುವ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಅಭ್ಯರ್ಥಿಗಳ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಶುಲ್ಕವನ್ನು (ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್ ಶುಲ್ಕ ಹೊರತುಪಡಿಸಿ) ಪಾವತಿಸಲು ಬಳಸಿದ ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್ ಖಾತೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಹಿಂದಿರುಗಿಸಲಾಗುವುದು. ಸದರಿ ನೇಮಕಾತಿಗಾಗಿ ಅಭ್ಯರ್ಥಿಗಳು ತಮ್ಮ ಅರ್ಜಿಗಳನ್ನು ಖುದ್ದಾಗಿ/ಅಂಚೆ/ಕೋರಿಯರ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಅವಕಾಶವಿಲ್ಲವೆಂದು ಈ ಮೂಲಕ ಸ್ಪಷ್ಟಪಡಿಸಿದೆ.

ಸಹಿ/–
ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು

PM SHRI
ಪಿಎಂ ಶ್ರೀ ಕೇಂದ್ರೀಯ ವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯ ಎ. ಎಸ್. ಸಿ. ಕೇಂದ್ರ (ದಕ್ಷಿಣ) ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು
ಪಿಎಂ ಶ್ರೀ ಕೇಂದ್ರೀಯ ವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯ ಎ. ಎಸ್. ಸಿ. ಕೇಂದ್ರ (ದಕ್ಷಿಣ), ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು
PM SHRI KENDRIYA VIDYALAYA A.S.C. CENTRE (SOUTH), BENGALURU
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Email: kvascbgr@gmail.com Website: https://ascbangalore.kvs.ac.in/ Phone No : 080-25302862

Walk-in-Interview for Contractual Teachers

S. NO	POSTS	INTERVIEW DATE
1	• PGT: Chemistry, Physics • TGT: Hindi, English, Social Science, Sanskrit • MISCELLANEOUS: Vocational Instructor, Art/Craft Coach, Music/Dance Coach, Yoga Instructor, Kannada Teacher, Special Educator • PRT and Balvatika Teacher	24/06/2026 (WEDNESDAY) Reporting Time: 8:30-10:30 AM

- Eligibility for PRT: D.El.Ed.and CTET (Paper 1) and Balvatika : Diploma in Nursery Teacher Education/Pre-school Education/Early Childhood Education Programme (D.E.C.Ed) of duration of not less than two years or B.Ed(Nursery) from NCTE recognized institution.
- Kindly visit the Samvida Sathi portal for registration (https://samvida-sathi.kvs.gov.in)
- Interviews are subject to candidates fulfilling the Eligibility criteria and Document Verifications

Note: For Qualifications and other details kindly visit the website https //:ascbangalore.kvs.ac.in

Principal

KIDWAI MEMORIAL INSTITUTE OF ONCOLOGY,
Cancer Research & Training Centre
GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA AUTONOMOUS INSTITUTION (Regional Centre of Cancer Research & Treatment Member of International Union Against Cancer)
Dr. M.H. Marigowda Road, Bengaluru-560029
Ph: +91 080-2656 0722/2656 0723, 080-6669 7999

No: KMIO/SME(1)/Tender/Manpower/506/2025-26 Date: 12-06-2026

e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTIFICATION

Online Tenders are invited in Two Bid System for the following through GOK e-Procurement tender for Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology.

Sl No.	Tender No. & Date	Name of the Items
1.	No. KMIO/SME(1) Tender/ Manpower/506/2026-27, Dt: 12-06-2026	Providing Manpower services of Group B, C & D to KMIO
2.	No. KMIO/SME(1) Tender/ Security/507/2026-27, Dt: 12-06-2026	Providing Manpower services of Security Services to Sipanidaga block to KMIO
3.	No. KMIO/SME(1) Tender/ House Keeping/508/ 2026-27, Dt: 12-06-2026	Providing Manpower services of House Keeping Services to Sipanidaga block to KMIO

The Bid Document will be available in online from 30-06-2026 to 31-07-2026. Bidders can view and download the Bid Document from the Website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in Bids have to be submitted through e-Procurement Portal and e-procurement Portal fees. The last date and time of Receipt of Bid through e-Procurement Portal is 31-07-2026 till 4:00 pm Tender Accepting Authority reserves the right to accept/reject/ cancel the tender without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/-
Financial Advisor

DIPR/SI/1151/2026-27

BIG GRIEVANCES Growing anger over electoral manipulation and human rights

PoK unrest exposes Pakistan's misgovernance, failures

SHARAT SABHARWAL

People try to get mobile phone signals from a hilltop after an internet shutdown in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, on Friday. AFP

Irony dies a thousand deaths each time Pakistan compulsively questions India's governance and human rights record in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). Pakistan's own record in the areas of J&K illegally occupied by it is riddled with gross mismanagement, exploitation and human rights violations. The chickens of its flawed policies are now coming home to roost.

Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) has been constituted into two units: the so-called "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" or "AJK" (area a little over 13,000 sq km, population 4.4 million) and the strategically far more important, the so-called "Gilgit-Baltistan" (area approximately 72,000 sq km and population 1.7 million). Both units have suffered gross misgovernance. The civil unrest reported recently took place in the former.

The so-called "AJK" is anything but 'azad' (free). Governed like a virtual colony, it was given a constitution with a parliamentary system in 1974. Elections to its 53-member Legislative Assembly have been rigged all along, resulting in governments acceptable to Pakistan's army-led establishment. Twelve of the seats are elected by the so-called refugees from the areas of Jammu and Kashmir on the Indian side residing in Pakistan. These have been used by the establishment to manipulate numbers in the Assembly.

The real authority vests in the "AJK Council", headed by the Prime Minister of Pakistan. It exercises control over a large number of critical issues, including natural resources. Defence, security, foreign affairs, foreign trade, currency and coins are the exclusive preserve of the Government of Pakistan. The oath of office of all functionaries requires them to state, inter alia, that they will remain loyal to Pakistan and the cause of accession of J&K to it. This belies Pakistan's claim that it wants the future of J&K to be decided through a plebiscite.

PoK, particularly "Gilgit-Baltistan", is home to rich resources such as precious and semi-precious stones, precious and base metals, industrial minerals and possibly some rare earth elements. It also has substantial hydroelectric potential. The exploitative policies of Pakistan have all along deprived the locals of the benefit of their resources. Thus, in spite of two large hydropower projects — Mangla Dam and Neelum-Jhelum — being located in "AJK", its people have had to suffer long hours of load-shedding. A survey conducted by the Government of Pakistan in 2014-15 put multidimensional poverty at 24.9% and 34.8% in "AJK" and "Gilgit-Baltistan", respectively.

The presence of Pakistan-sponsored anti-India terrorists in PoK is also resented by the locals. Pakistan has consistently used a heavy-handed approach in PoK. A report on "AJK" issued by Human Rights Watch in 2006 referred, inter alia, to close surveillance of the local population by the Pakistan Army, the routine use of torture by security agencies and tight control over freedom of expression.

Another report on civil unrest in "AJK" in 2024, issued by the civil society organisation Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, also referred to the strong-arm tactics used by the security agencies. Similar tactics have been used to keep the populace under control in "Gilgit-Baltistan". The demography of this region has been altered to the detriment of its Shia majority. This has contributed to periodic sectarian violence.

Civil rights groups in "AJK" came together in 2023 to constitute the Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) to seek redressal of people's grievances. Its demands have included governance reforms, improved public services, reduction in the price of electricity and wheat flour, payment of royalty for the electricity produced by local hydel power projects, abolition of perks and privileges enjoyed by the political elite and bureaucracy, and abolition of the aforementioned 12 seats for "refugees" in the Legislative Assembly.

While the government conceded some demands, it has remained inflexible on others, resulting in periodic large-scale protests and violence. The bout of violence earlier this month was triggered by the death of a local trader in a confrontation with the security agencies. It came against the backdrop of the government dragging its feet on the demand for the abolition of the 12 "refugee" seats, which has assumed urgency in view of the Assembly elections due on July 27, and the banning of JAAC by the government. At least 11 people, including four policemen, were killed and several injured in clashes between protesters and security forces. The government has initiated legal proceedings against JAAC leaders on charges of sedition and anti-state activities and claims that a sit-in organised by JAAC has dispersed.

Politically, "Gilgit-Baltistan" is worse off than "AJK". Dubbed the "Northern Areas" and administered directly by the Government of Pakistan, it was renamed "Gilgit-Baltistan" and given a veneer of self-governance through an ordinance in 2009. However, as in the case of "AJK", the real authority continues to vest in Islamabad. The region remains in constitutional limbo. During the 2018 election campaign, Imran Khan promised "provisional" provincial status for "Gilgit-Baltistan", but nothing came of that promise. There have been allegations of widespread rigging in the election to the "Gilgit-Baltistan" Assembly held on June 7. The results are yet to be formally announced, though the PPP is expected to form the next government.

Ironically, Pakistan, which used to mobilise opinion among British politicians and the Mirpuri diaspora in the UK to target India on Kashmir, has now complained about "unwarranted remarks" by certain British MPs and members of the Pakistani diaspora regarding the recent violence in "AJK".

In spite of repeated protests in PoK against misgovernance, it would be wrong to conclude that there is any serious demand or groundswell among the people there to join India. However, Pakistan is playing with fire by resorting to force rather than political means to address the genuine grievances of the people.

Reacting to the "AJK" violence, India issued a measured statement, describing the events as a natural consequence of Pakistan's oppressive approach and systematic plundering of the resources of the territory under its forcible and illegal occupation, and adding that Pakistan must be held accountable for its horrific human rights violations. However, should civil unrest in PoK worsen as a result of Pakistan's injudicious policies, India may be compelled to take a more proactive stance.

(The author is a former high commissioner to Pakistan).

WORLD AT A GLANCE

A cardboard model of a bulldozer burns as demonstrators release coloured smoke during a march against racism, war and exploitation and in support of migrants' rights in Rome, Italy, on Saturday. REUTERS

Kids on social media over 2 hours a day at higher risk of mental illness

▸ Adolescents who spend more than two hours a day on social media face a higher risk of developing mental health problems, according to a new Australian study published in the Medical Journal of Australia, The Conversation/PTI reports from Melbourne.

Researchers tracked 1,195 students in Melbourne from ages 12 to 18 and found that those using social media for more than two hours daily were more likely to experience symptoms of depression and poor wellbeing a year later compared with those spending less than one hour a day on the platforms.

The study found the risks were most pronounced among younger adolescents aged 12 to 13, with effects significantly stronger than those observed in older teenagers.

The researchers said the estimated risk of depression, anxiety, poor wellbeing and self-harm among 12- to 13-year-olds was roughly twice as high as among adolescents aged 14 to 16 and 17 to 18. Among girls aged 12 to 13, more than two hours of daily social media use was associated with around 11 additional cases of high depressive symptoms per 100 adolescents.

India, Nepal discuss railway link

▸ India and Nepal have held discussions on cross-border railway links, including passenger train services on the Janakpur-Ayodhya section, and bilateral cooperation in the sector, PTI reports from Kathmandu.

The discussions between the two countries were part of the 10th Project Steering Committee and the 8th Joint Working Group meetings held here on June 11 and 12, the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu said on Friday.

The standard operating procedures for the commencement of passenger train services on the Janakpur-Ayodhya section were one of the focus points during the engagement between the two sides. Nepal's Janakpur — believed to be the birthplace of Lord Ram's wife Sita — is 220 km southeast of Kathmandu and about 500 km east of Ayodhya. Devotees from both sides visit the two places regularly in large numbers.

Students prepare for a performance on the International Albinism Awareness Day in Thika, Kenya, on Saturday. AFP

US-Iran deal to be signed today, says Trump

Preparing for the electronic signing of peace deal: Pak

TEHRAN, AFP

DONALD TRUMP
US President

"The deal is scheduled to get signed tomorrow, and immediately after it is signed, the Hormuz Strait is open to all.

KHAMENEI FUNERAL

■ Iran's state-run news agency said that the funeral for its former Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, would be held on July 4. He was killed by Israel and US strikes in late February.

US President Donald Trump said on Saturday that a deal with Iran to end the war in West Asia would be signed on Sunday and that the strategic Strait of Hormuz would be "open to all" immediately afterwards.

Iran had offered a different timeline earlier in the day but nonetheless signalled that an agreement was in the offing, as both the warring parties and their mediators expressed increasing optimism that weeks of halting negotiations were drawing to a close.

The new momentum came despite fresh skirmishes in the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran has blockaded since early in the war, throwing global markets into turmoil. "The Deal is scheduled to get signed tomorrow, and immediately after it is signed, the Hormuz Strait is OPEN TO ALL," Trump said on his Truth Social platform.

Since an April 8 truce paused the worst of the fighting, Trump has repeatedly insisted a deal was near, only for the wrangling to drag on.

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei had said earlier on Saturday that the date of the signing was yet to be determined, but "it will not be tomorrow".

However, he added: "The possibility of this happening in the coming days cannot be ruled out."

The leader of key mediator Pakistan had also said a deal was closer "than ever before".

"With finalisation likely expected in the next 24 hours, Pakistan is preparing for the electronic signing of the peace deal immediately after, followed by technical-level talks next week," said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

A Pakistani foreign ministry statement also said the signing was planned for Sunday.

11 Indian sailors convicted for cocaine trafficking

LAGOS, PTI: Eleven Indian sailors have been convicted and their merchant vessel fined $5.3 million by a court in Nigeria for cocaine trafficking.

They were arrested around six months ago by operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) for allegedly importing 31.5 kilogrammes of cocaine from the Marshall Islands into Nigeria through the Apapa seaport in Lagos, the agency said in a statement on Thursday.

The master of the vessel and 10 other crew members were convicted under the NDLEA Act by Justice Joseph Chukwujekwu Aneke, it said.

The vessel was ordered to pay restitution of $5.3 million to the Nigerian government. The three principal officers were directed to pay $100,000 each, while the remaining crew members were ordered to pay $50,000 each. Each defendant was also fined 100,000 naira.

US strike kills Venezuelan gang leader

WASHINGTON, AP/PTI

President Donald Trump said on Friday that a "swift and lethal kinetic" US strike had killed Hector Rusthenford Guerrero Flores, whom he called "the infamous leader" of the Tren de Aragua gang.

Tren de Aragua has been labelled by the United States as a terrorist organisation. Guerrero Flores was charged in a New York federal court with racketeering conspiracy and other crimes, including providing support to terrorists in crimes that stretched over more than a decade, authorities announced in December.

Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth posted on X that the strike occurred earlier in the week on a Tren de Aragua compound in Venezuela. US Attorney Jay Clayton said at the time that the gang was responsible for countless acts of violence, extortion and drug trafficking in North America, South America and Europe. Trump nominated Clayton on Thursday to be director of national intelligence.

The US State Department had offered rewards of up to $5 million for information leading to Guerrero Flores' arrest.

In a post on his social media site, Trump wrote: "Tren de Aragua terrorists no longer have safe haven in Venezuela or anywhere else and, under my leadership, we will find these vicious murderers and drug lords anytime, anyplace, and send them to the depths of hell where they belong." Trump's post referred to Guerrero Flores by his alias, "Niño Guerrero."

Hegseth said: "The operation underscores the shared US and Venezuelan commitment to take the fight to narco-terrorists and deny them any safe haven in our hemisphere."

SU DO KU X - 3946

				7	5			
	2		8		3		6	
		5						
6								
				1			8	
	1	7	9				2	6
	8				7			
9				4			5	

SOLUTION TO 3945

6	2	9	3	7	1	8	5	4
4	1	8	6	9	5	3	2	7
5	3	7	4	8	2	1	9	6
9	7	5	8	2	3	6	4	1
1	8	4	9	5	6	2	7	3
3	6	2	7	1	4	5	8	9
7	4	6	2	3	8	9	1	5
2	9	1	5	6	7	4	3	8
8	5	3	1	4	9	7	6	2

To solve the puzzle:
The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

PRASAR BHARATI
(India's Public Service Broadcaster)
Doordarshan Kendra, Bengaluru–560006

KIND ATTENTION VIEWERS

As decided by Prasar Bharati, Doordarshan the Transmission of DD Chandana Channel in High Definition (HD) format on DTH & DD FREEDISH is to commence with effect from 15.06.2026.

Satellite	:	GSAT 17
Polarization	:	Horizontal
Frequency	:	4073 MHz
Symbol Rate	:	2.90 Msps
Modulation	:	8PSK
FEC	:	¾

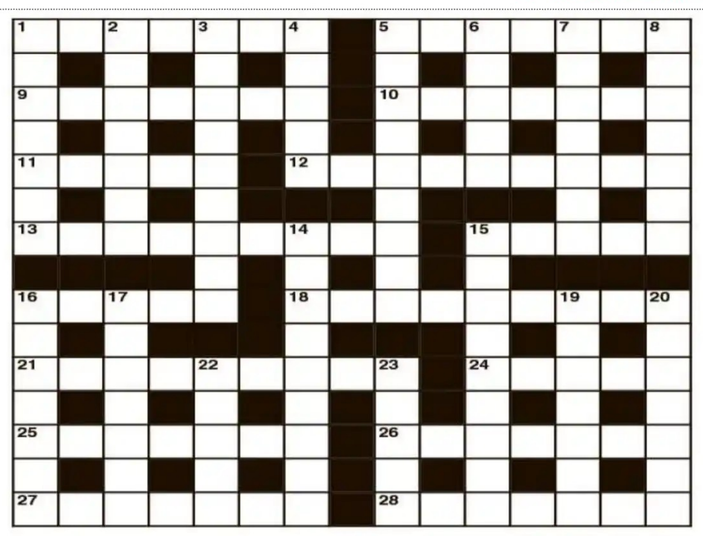
The test transmission of DD Chandana programmes in HD format is already on air with the above said parameters.

Viewers are hereby requested to configure their HD Set Top Boxes as per the above settings to receive DD-Chandana (HD) signals.

It is to further add that DD-Chandana SD Services will continue to be simulcast in the existing settings at 3961 MHz frequency.

Doordarshan
Bengaluru – 560 006

◆ SUNDAY CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 2684 ◆



ACROSS
1 Flowers on fruit trees (7)
5 To praise (7)
9 Not precisely true (7)
10 Act as go-between (7)
11 Male duck (5)
12 Unassailable (4-5)
13 To grimace (4,1,4)
15 Country of northeast Africa (5)
16 Clever expedient (5)
18 To a sickening extent (2,7)
21 Beset by conflict (9)
24 African spiral-horned antelope (5)
25 Sporting firearm (7)
26 To shock and anger (7)
27 Aloofness (7)
28 Generosity (7)

DOWN
1 Gradual accumulation (5-2)
2 From end to end (7)
3 Deadlock (9)
4 Measuring instrument (5)
5 Confess everything (4,5)
6 King with golden touch (5)
7 Made possible (7)
8 A fine German china (7)
14 Immediately on looking (2,1,6)
15 A seaman's waterproof hat (9)
16 Type of sideboard with shelves (7)
17 Of questionable truth (7)
19 Originate (7)
20 Utter folly (7)
22 Fierce Asian wildcat (5)
23 Quaintly amusing (5)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 4044

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 9, Over-blown 10, Ho-oligan 12, Hail 13, A-d-vent 14, Palmist 15, Needs must 17, Hanging on 18, Soupcon 20, On ti-me 21, Is-l(on)e(ly) 24, St-R-eamer 26, Made a row 28, Hart (heart) 29, In-ch-ed 31, Si-mila-r 34, MOst o-f all 36, Dark deeds 38, Swallow 39, W-all-et 40, Bill 41, In-spirit 42, Grey hairs.
DOWN: 1, Bo-th e-nds 2, Desi-re 3, Good turn 4, In-tent 5, Chit-chat 6, Hopping mad 7, Villa-in 8, Ha-tin-g 11, Stunned (rev) 16, Sucker 19, Utter 20, O-U-r 22, S-to-ol 23, H-arm-e'd 25, Manual work 26, Mad (rev) 27, Ch-emise 30, Hold with 31, Screened 32, Rest-less 33, Dol-lops 35, Stains 36, Deluge 37, E-licit.

EASY
ACROSS: 9, Makeshift 10, Aberrant 12, Iota 13, Kopeck (or Copeck) 14, Luckier 15, Observant 17, Ingenious 18, Empress 20, Oceans 21, Beau 24, Recouped 26, Precepts 28, Cosh 29, Arcane 31, Bananas 34, Reservoir 36, Woodlouse 38, Ikebana 39, Drench 40, Asti 41, Creosote 42, Duplicate.
DOWN: 1, Omnivore 2, Skates 3, Bifocals 4, Attest 5, Backfire 6, Negligence 7, Bracing 8, Indigo 11, Brusque 16, Rhebok (or Reebok) 19, Press 20, Old 22, Eaten 23, Fennel 25, Percolator 26, Pie 27, Scorpio 30, Abridged 31, Bioscope 32, Specimen 33, Creator 35, Sherry 36, Wieldy 37, Unseat.

TEAMS: 48 VENUES: 16 TOURNAMENT SPAN: 39 DAYS

WORLD CUP

Beckham gets Hollywood star as WC begins in US

Football idol David Beckham joined the ranks of entertainment royalty on Friday when he was honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, hours before the United States hosts its first game of the 2026 World Cup, reports AFP from Los Angeles.

Film legend Tom Cruise was on hand to pay tribute to Beckham, who he said had changed the face of football in the United States.

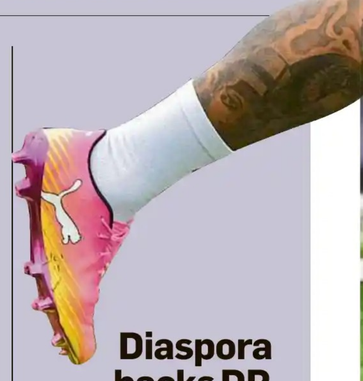
Former Manchester United and England captain Beckham, 51, told a throng of fans on the sun-kissed boulevard it was a "truly incredible moment."

Kids' nonprofit returns 20 free tickets

Ali Abdulla was over the moon when he learned his youth-soccer nonprofit would receive 20 free tickets to the World Cup in Seattle. With ticket prices hovering around $1,000, it was an incredible opportunity for them, reports AP from Seattle.

Then the US barred Omar Artan - the first Somali referee set to officiate in the World Cup. Abdulla wanted to give up his position as a volunteer FIFA "ambassador" in solidarity,

But when he told parents and coaches about his decision, they suggested something even more significant: Give back the tickets.



Diaspora backs DR Congo amid fan shortage

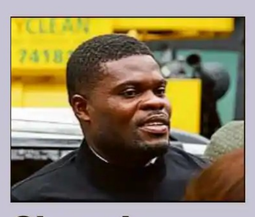
Wearing elegant black suits decked out with leopard-print sashes and matching bags, Congo's World Cup team arrived in Houston despite ebola-related restrictions around the globe that have kept fans at home away from the games, reports AFP from Houston.

England left with solitary football after theft

The England football team was dealt a telling blow after almost all of its training equipment, including players' boots and manager Thomas Tuchel's tactical gear, was reportedly stolen ahead of its World Cup opener against Croatia, reports PTI from Kansas City

"The Football Association (FA) is trying to ascertain what was stolen, with balls and boots among the items feared to have been taken, after vehicles transferring equipment to their Swope Soccer Village base in Kansas City were broken into," the BBC reported.

The report also stated that police officers, who are in touch with the FA, are investigating the matter.



Ghana's Partey refused entry to Canada

Thomas Partey, who is facing trial in Britain on rape charges, will miss Ghana's World Cup opener against Panama after Canadian authorities denied him a visa, FIFA said on Friday, reports AFP from Toronto.

The Villarreal midfielder, who previously played for Arsenal, has pleaded not guilty to seven charges of rape and one count of sexual assault relating to allegations by four different women between 2020 and 2022.

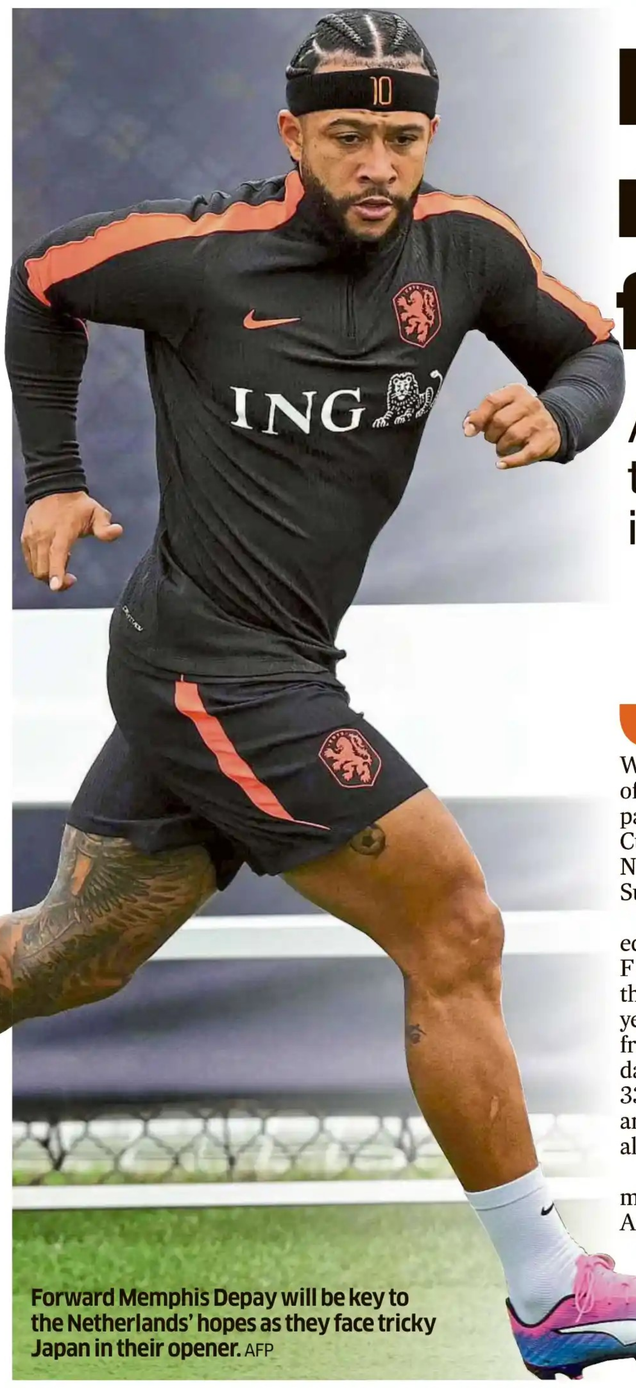
A trial has been set for next year, allowing the 32-year-old to represent Ghana at the World Cup.

Tartan Army digs deep into pockets for WC return

Scotland's raucous Tartan Army of supporters massed in downtown Boston on Friday, with fans saying they had no qualms about the thousands of dollars they are spending to see their team return to the World Cup after a 28-year absence, reports AFP from Boston.

"I've spent the kids' inheritance," joked Willie Dowie, 61, Dowie - who emigrated from Scotland to Australia 42 years ago - and his wife Caroline arrived in Boston on Thursday.

The couple paid $4,000 for four tickets to see the team's first two World Cup matches since 1998.



Forward Memphis Depay will be key to the Netherlands' hopes as they face tricky Japan in their opener. AFP

Endo exit forces midfield rethink for Japan

Asian powerhouse take on the Netherlands in high-stakes clash

DALLAS, REUTERS

Japan coach Hajime Moriyasu must decide who will replace retired captain Wataru Endo at the heart of his midfield as they prepare to kick off their World Cup campaign against the Netherlands in Dallas on Sunday.

Endo had been expected to feature in the Group F clash but a foot injury that has plagued him this year forced his withdrawal from the squad on Thursday and prompted the 33-year-old midfielder to announce his international retirement.

He had formed a midfield partnership with Ao Tanaka in Japan's most recent friendly against Iceland but Moriyasu's confidence in his options was reflected in his decision to replace Endo with forward Shuto Machino.

Tanaka could be paired with Germany-based Kaishu Sano or Daichi Kamada.

"I was surprised to hear about Endo's departure," said Japan playmaker Takefusa Kubo. "We'll just have to make do with the remaining players.

"I heard that Endo talked to (defender) Ko Itakura and I think he's conveyed a lot of information, so I'm sure Itakura will share that with the team."

Netherlands boss Ronald Koeman has concerns of his own with goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen recovering from a knock sustained in a 2-1 friendly win over Uzbekistan while forward Memphis Depay has played little over the last three months.

"We know that Memphis had a few injuries and he didn't play the last few weeks but he is back and every day he is getting closer to his 100 percent fitness," Koeman said.

"He's our top scorer in the national team and we need him if we'd like to go in a good way in this tournament. We need all the players but, of course we need Memphis Depay as well."

The game at Dallas Stadium will be the first between the nations since a 2-2 draw in a friendly in 2013 and the Dutch registered a 1-0 win over the Japanese at their only previous World Cup meeting in South Africa in 2010.

"They have shown that they're really strong as a team," Koeman said of the Japanese.

"We believe in ourselves, we respect Japan but we are Holland and they will respect us. We are looking forward. I think it will be an interesting match, and a difficult one."

Only in Kerala: A floating boat for 'Argentine team'

KOZHIKODE, PTI: A stadium in the middle of a Kerala river with the entire Argentine squad standing on it! No, the South American team has not finally arrived in the state-but it is a float created by football-crazy fans in Pullavoor village here.

Football mania has already gripped the state in the run-up to the World Cup, with posters, flex boards, and cutouts of football stars like Messi and Neymar, and popular teams including Brazil, Argentina, and Portugal, appearing along roads and in villages, and people colouring their homes in the colours of top teams.

Now, in Pullavoor, Argentina fans have set up a float in the middle of the river in the form of a mini football stadium, with cutouts of the entire Argentine squad standing on top of it.

The creators of the float, which has been set up on boats, said they were confident that Argentina would win the World Cup this time as well.

Visuals on a TV channel showed kids and adults walking on top of the float and clicking photos and selfies.

On Sunday from late morning

Australia vs **Turkiye** (9.30 am)
Germany vs **Curacao** (10.30 pm)

Monday early morning

Netherlands vs **Japan** (1.30 am)
Ivory Coast vs **Ecuador** (4.30 am)
Sweden vs **Tunisia** (7.30 am)

All timings in IST

Germany eye big win against debutants Curacao

BOSTON, REUTERS

Germany will look to start their World Cup campaign with a big win over Curacao, with the four-time champions out to repair their damaged international reputation following first-round exits in the previous two editions.

The Germans, who won the 2014 edition, have set their sights on a fifth world title even though they do not see themselves as among the favourites this year.

Since winning the 2014 World Cup, they have not gotten out of their group, with just two wins since the title run in Brazil. In Russia in 2018 they finished last in their group and four years later in Qatar they finished third.

"We are ready," Germany's 38-year-old coach Julian Nagelsmann said. "I don't know if it's my job to create euphoria ahead of the tournament. My job is to create the moments that lead to that joy."

They could not have hoped for easier first opponents than minnows Curacao, the smallest nation to qualify for the World Cup. Ecuador and Ivory Coast complete Group E.

Julian Nagelsmann's Germany are on a nine-match winning run, including a 4-0 victory over Finland in their last friendly at home on May 31 and a 2-1 win over World Cup co-hosts the United States six days ago.

Curacao are rank outsiders, with most of their players plying their trade in the Netherlands or in lower European leagues.

But veteran coach Dick Advocaat, who at 78 will become the oldest coach in World Cup history, relishes facing Germany in their tournament start.

"Germany are of course clear favourites in the group," Advocaat said. "They are still a big footballing country. Starting off against Germany is fantastic. We will find out immediately where we stand."

Advocaat knows there is a massive gap in quality, which Germany, with world-class players like Kai Havertz, Florian Wirtz and Manuel Neuer, want to take advantage of to get their tournament off to a winning start.

"We aren't among the absolute top favourites—there are three or four others," said Germany national team director Rudi Voeller, a 1990 World Cup winner with Germany. "But we know how important an opening win is."

"We are here and want to be a team that is difficult to beat. We want to top our group and then assert ourselves in the knockout stage."

Any result other than victory could prove tricky in the group while also instantly piling pressure on the Germans, with fans back home desperate to see their team return to winning ways after their last two early exits.

"The two wins from our last two friendlies give us a good feeling and we want to maintain that here," Voeller said. "There is no guarantee if you win the first game that that is the way the tournament will go for you. We have to go through the group as the top team, there is no discussion about that. That is our goal."

Kai Havertz will have to fire from the front as Germany seek to restrore pride when they kick off their campaign against Curacao. REUTERS

Hollywood actors & other celebrities cheer for New York Knicks against Spurs at the NBA Finals. IMAGN IMAGES

Knicks frenzy pushes WC to sidelines in NY

NEW YORK, AFP: It will be Knicks vs the World Cup in New York on Saturday, and only one winner.

The city is at a fever pitch as the hometown basketball team sits on the brink of a NBA Championship win -- pushing the Brazil vs Morocco game deep into the shadows.

"(The World Cup) is going to be fun... but right now, I'm a New Yorker, so we're going for the Knicks, basketball! Let's take this win. And after that, we can think about the World Cup," said actor Robert Chen, 32, next to the Brooklyn bridge FIFA fan zone.

The MetLife stadium, in neighbouring New Jersey but serving the Big Apple-based World Cup fans, will face a major test of its rail link to Manhattan which has come under fire for its steep $98 price tag.

But New York was a sea of Knicks orange as the team closed in on what will be their first title in 53 years if they win the clash with the San Antonio Spurs being played away in Texas.

"Everyone is kind of craving this victory, and it's excitement in the air... it's contagious," said Knicks fan and Queens-based street cart vendor Angel Diaz, 42.

With 1.55 lakh population, Curacao sets its date with history

NEW DELHI, PTI

Curacao will create history as the former Dutch colony will become the tiniest nation to play the FIFA World Cup Finals. AFP

When former Aston Villa midfielder Leandro Bacuna, his younger brother Juninho, and Sheffield United forward Tahith Chong take the field against the mighty Germans on Sunday at the FIFA World Cup, the people of the tiny island of Curacao will savour a historic moment.

As Curacao, located 40 miles north of Venezuela and was a part of erstwhile Netherland Antilles till 2010, tries to hold its own among the heavyweights of world football, opponents are likely to encounter a sprightly bunch on whom the Dutch connections heavily weigh because of its shared history and culture.

Although Curacao is 8000 miles away from 'The Netherlands', it is culturally more European than Caribbean because of its Dutch influence for centuries.

No wonder, world football's most revered 'Journeyman Head Coach' Dick Advocaat, at 78, is the oldest coach of the smallest participating nation.

And 12 from the squad of 21 play in the Dutch Premier Division better known as 'Eredivisie'. The skipper Leandro, who has played in the English Premier League now plays in Turkiye's top tier while striker Chong, who has had made five appearances for Manchester United, now plays for Championship side Sheffield United.

With a population of 1.55 lakh, which is marginally more than number of people who reside in NCR's Greater Noida, this is one 'Blue Family' that has punched above its weight in its CONCACAF group during the World Cup qualifiers.

However, one can't deny that Mexico and USA being co-hosts made their journey easy as the two countries weren't a part of the qualifiers. But beating a Jamaican team managed by former England manager Steve McClaren and Trinidad & Tobago headlined by United legend Dwight Yorke deserves the kudos.

TEAMS: 48 VENUES: 16 TOURNAMENT SPAN: 39 DAYS

England, Nigeria were options but Balogun has dream WC debut with US

INGLEWOOD, AP

Folarin Balogun could have played for any one of three countries. He chose the United States, and it paid off with a splashy World Cup debut on home soil.

The 24-year-old striker scored two goals as the Americans opened with a 4-1 victory over Paraguay on Friday night in front of a rabid and star-studded red, white and blue-clad sold-out crowd of 70,492 at SoFi Stadium.

"I visualized my debut in the World Cup scoring, but the reality did surpass that," Balogun said. "A very dreamy night."

With retired England captain David Beckham looking on, Balogun became the first US player to score multiple goals in a World Cup game since 1930. Back then, Bert Patenaude scored all three goals in a 3-0 US win over Paraguay, the first hat trick in World Cup history.

"The kid's insane," teammate Christian Pulisic said. "He's lethal right now. We're really lucky to have him."

Balogun was born in the New York City borough of Brooklyn to Nigerian parents. A month later, he moved to England, where he grew up in London. He joined Arsenal's academy at age 8. He represented England at the youth level and also played for the US under-18 team.

England's roster is traditionally filled with stars. Nigeria failed to qualify for this World Cup. So Balogun is making himself an American household name during this summer of soccer.

"Everyone will look at the goals," Pulisic said, "but the way he's fighting against these center backs, holding up the ball, getting fouls, I really like it."

Balogun committed to play for the US three years ago. "I've always said the fans gave me so much motivation and showed me so much support. The most important thing has always been to be able to repay that," he said.

Folarin Balogun

Dominant US register statement victory

Balogun strikes a brace in hosts' thumping win over Paraguay

LOS ANGELES, AFP

The United States could scarcely have scripted a better start to their World Cup as a Folarin Balogun brace and Gio Reyna curler fired the co-hosts to a 4-1 drubbing of Paraguay in front of Hollywood royalty in Los Angeles on Friday.

The hosts took the lead in the tournament's first game on US soil within seven minutes thanks to an own goal, and by the end of an utterly dominant half the home fans were in dreamland, their side up by three.

Tom Cruise, Leonardo DiCaprio and Paris Hilton were among a sold-out 70,492 crowd as the US -- co-hosting the tournament with Mexico and Canada -- piled wave after wave of attacks on the South Americans, with Reyna polishing off the win late in stoppage time after Mauricio had pulled one back.

The win and emphatic scoreline puts the US in a favorable position already to progress from Group D, which also contains Australia and Turkey.

The night's only potential sour note was the half-time withdrawal of Christian Pulisic, the US attacking talisman who is carrying the hopes of the nation as they attempt a deep run into the World Cup knockouts for the first time since their quarterfinal appearance in 2002.

Paraguay could not have been more obliging guests from kickoff. In the seventh minute, Weston McKennie picked up the ball in the center circle and drove upfield, finding Pulisic.

Pulisic darted between two defenders and returned the ball to McKennie, whose pass to striker Balogun was bundled into his own net by a hapless Damian Bobadilla.

The stadium erupted, and a US onslaught began.

The hosts oozed confidence. Both McKennie and Tillman played backheel through balls into the area, while captain Tim Ream sprayed out passes from the heart of defense.

Balogun had a goal ruled out in the 28th minute. He had strayed offside, as had Pulisic in the buildup.

But the Monaco striker had the ball in the net again three minutes later, thanks to a superb ball down the left flank by Antonee Robinson to Pulisic, whose cross to Balogun took a slight fortuitous deflection.

The US added a third on the cusp of half-time. Tillman found Balogun down the right, who evaded Omar Alderete's challenge, skipped inside Gustavo Gomez and curled his shot perfectly into the top left corner.

US	Paraguay
4	1

It could have been four or five, with Chris Richards -- returning from injury -- flashing a header barely an inch wide. The US had 75 percent possession in the first half.

Now without the dangerous Pulisic, the hosts sat back slightly in the second half.

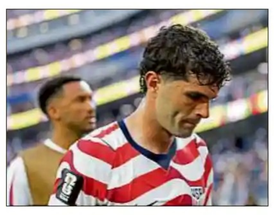
Paraguay finally offered a threat. Their dangerous forward Julio Enciso, who started despite a hamstring injury, picked up the ball on the edge of the area and fed in Brazil-born substitute Mauricio, who pulled one back.

Reyna scored a superb fourth with the outside of his right foot that curled just inside the far post.

The game had been preceded by a Tinseltown-style opening ceremony. Katy Perry delivered the headline performance, accompanied by singers Future, Tyla, Anitta and K-pop star Lisa.

Performers danced around a giant World Cup trophy beneath enormous "FIFA" letters in the gold favored by US President Donald Trump -- who did not attend, instead wishing the team luck via phone before kickoff.

USA's Folarin Balogun (right) scores his team's third goal during their Group D match against Paraguay at the LA Stadium in Inglewood. AFP



Pulisic plays down injury concerns

LOS ANGELES, AFP: United States star Christian Pulisic played down injury concerns after he was hooked at half-time in the World Cup co-hosts' 4-1 opening win over Paraguay, telling journalists it was just a precaution.

"I just got a bit of a kick in the first half so I'm really hoping that it's nothing. Taking a little bit of precaution today. But I'm hoping I'll be fine in the next few days," said Pulisic.

The AC Milan forward is the US team's talisman, shouldering the weight of a nation's expectations as they try to make history with a deep run in a World Cup in which all of their games will be played on home soil. Pulisic was a constant menace in a rampant first half, providing an assist as well as helping create Paraguay's own goal with a clever one-two with Weston McKennie.

Canada earn first-ever World Cup point after Bosnia draw

TORONTO, AFP

Co-hosts Canada grabbed a second-half equaliser to draw 1-1 with Bosnia and Herzegovina on Friday in the first World Cup finals game ever played on Canadian soil.

Cyle Larin got Canada's goal after Jovo Lukic put Bosnia ahead with a header in the 21st minute in Toronto.

The result gave Canada its first point in World Cup history.

Canadian sides had a perfect record of futility at two previous tournament appearances in 1986 and 2022, with six losses.

Lukic's goal from a corner sent the small but enthusiastic Bosnian contingent at the Toronto Stadium into a frenzy.

Canada had the majority of play in the first half but failed to generate any real chances.

The stadium erupted in the 17th minute when forward Jonathan David had a clear shot on goal, but it was easily handled by Bosnian keeper Nikola Vasilj.

Canada	Bosnia
1	1

Canada's Cyle Larin celebrates scoring an equaliser against Bosnia and Herzegovina. REUTERS

Canada's Ismael Kone had a golden opportunity in the 30th minute, but sailed his strike well over the net, prompting groans from tens of thousands of Canadians who blanketed the stadium in a sea of red.

The second half began in similar fashion, with Canada largely on the attack, but unable to find the net.

Bosnia's veteran defender Sead Kolasinac saved a certain goal when he diverted a strike from David onto the crossbar, extending Canada's agony.

But Larin's strike in the 78th minute marked a high point in Canada's limited World Cup history, causing a mostly Canadian crowd of 43,000 to erupt.

Canada threatened to go ahead in the final minutes, narrowly missing a goal near the final whistle.

Canadian entertainment royalty attended the match at the home of the MLS's Toronto FC, including film star Ryan Reynolds, from Vancouver, and Saturday Night Live and Austin Powers star Mike Myers, a Toronto native.

Ronaldo wants Portugal focused on good start

NEW YORK, AP

Portugal traveled to the United States with Cristiano Ronaldo saying the team needs to focus on getting off to a good start instead of thinking ahead about contending for its first World Cup title.

The Portuguese are among the favorites at the expanded 48-team tournament and the 41-year-old Ronaldo will be playing in his sixth World Cup, the most ever alongside rival Lionel Messi of Argentina.

"It is important to get off to a good start, do well in the first and second matches and then finish first in the group," Ronaldo told reporters in Portugal before the team's departure. "Then we go match by match, but not with the expectations of winning it all. It has to be step by step. A good start is the most important thing."

Portugal will play its opening Group K match against Congo on Wednesday in Houston. The team then faces Uzbekistan on June 23, again in Houston, and finishes the group stage against Colombia on June 27 in Miami.

Ronaldo said it will be further in the tournament, "when things get tighter and the psychological and physical fatigue" come into play, "that we will know who the real champions are."

This is Portugal's ninth World Cup appearance. The team finished third in 1966 and fourth in 2006 - when Ronaldo made his World Cup debut. In 2022, Portugal reached the quarterfinals but was upset by Morocco 1-0.

Ronaldo, who won the European Championship with Portugal in 2016, said the team's preparation at home was intense and productive. He said he is feeling well physically and the whole squad is ready and hopeful ahead of its quest for a first World Cup title.

"It's a very good generation of players," said Ronaldo, who now plays in Saudi Arabia after spending most of professional career with Real Madrid and Manchester United. "But there are factors that we can't control. Winning or losing, which is the most important thing, depends on many factors. But it's a generation that will make the Portuguese people happy."

Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo arrives in Palm Beach ahead of their FIFA World Cup campaign. REUTERS

An Astronaut, movie stars and a knight: US brings glitz for opener

Singers Katy Perry and Tius Luka perform during the opening ceremony before the US-Paraguay match at the FIFA World Cup on Friday. REUTERS

LOS ANGELES, AFP

The World Cup arrived in the United States on Friday in a blizzard of celebrity and glamour, with Los Angeles pulling out all the stops for the opening game between Team USA and Paraguay.

The stands at SoFi stadium were a who's who of famous folk in the world's entertainment capital, with movie legends like Tom Cruise, Leonardo DiCaprio and "Star Wars" director George Lucas joined by the likes of socialite Paris Hilton and Microsoft founder Bill Gates.

Other Hollywood names included Oscar winner Halle Berry, actor and director Owen Wilson and "West Wing" alum Rob Lowe.

Singer -- and one-time astronaut -- Katy Perry, who performed in the opening ceremony, repaired to the seats to watch the action on the pitch while she cuddled up to former Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau.

The pair have recently gone "Insta-official" with a relationship that has sent not a small number of women around the world into a funk of jealousy.

British footballing giant David Beckham was also in the stands -- sitting next to Cruise -- hours after he had been feted with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

The honour was the latest in a long line for the former England captain, who was knighted by Britain's King Charles last year to become Sir David Beckham.

Basketball legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar was also cheering for the USA, who romped to a 4-1 victory over a hapless-looking Paraguay, giving the host nation its highest-scoring World Cup result.

Before the game began, a packed SoFi Stadium was bid a booming "Welcome to the USA" in a glitzy ceremony that kicked off more than five weeks of football in the US, which is sharing the tournament with Mexico and Canada.

The stadium's giant "jumbotron" screen flashed a close-up of the city's famous Hollywood sign, before a marching band struck up and were joined by singers including Future, Tyla, Anitta and K-pop star Lisa.

Costumes and props were designed to evoke Los Angeles street art, and the city's creative industries.

Suspended from the roof of the space-age venue were enormous "FIFA" letters in the gold favored by US President Donald Trump -- who did not attend.

He instead spoke to the team via phone beforehand, telling them "I think you've a really good chance of going all the way. I just want to wish you a lot of luck."

LIFE IN FAST LANE A wave of runners is challenging the stereotype of India as a non-sprinting nation

The sub-10 horizon: Inside India's sprint surge

ADITYA K HALDER
BENGALURU, DHNS

Oblique Seville knows what it takes to break the barrier as the reigning world champion spent three long seasons circling the sub-10 mark. After clocking 10.13 seconds in 2019, it took him three seasons before finally dipping under at 9.86. For someone who has gone as quick as 9.77 now, the Jamaican believes India is closer than ever to its first sub-10 sprinter. All it needs is one breakthrough run to uncork a wave that follows.

Having trained alongside Indian athletes in the past, he has been struck by their discipline and willingness to trust the process. "I have trained with Indian runners before, and what stood out was how disciplined they are. They listen, they follow instructions and that's a big part of improvement," he told DHoS last year.

That quiet belief is now beginning to mirror on the track when Gurindervir Singh clocked a statement 10.09 at the Federation Cup in Ranchi this May. India, which took nearly two decades to move from its first sub-10.30 run to entering the 10.20s, shaved off another tenth in less than a season for a seismic jump that broke the stereotype about Indian sprinters.

The performance itself bordered on the surreal as the national record changed hands repeatedly between Gurindervir and his training partner Animesh Kujur over a space of 24 hours at the Birsa Munda Stadium. The duel felt like a declaration of intent as Gurindervir first edged past the previous mark of 10.18 by 0.01 in the semifinal, only for Animesh Kujur to reclaim it minutes later with a 10.15 run. But the final belonged to Gurindervir as the Ounjab athlete surged ahead to signal the shift in Indian sprinting. Those who watched closely sensed it coming from far away after the Athletics Federation of India set a stiff Commonwealth Games qualification mark of 10.16 seconds.

"We had a feeling the national record would go at the Federation Cup," says Karnataka sprinter Unnathi Aiyappa, the current fastest women's 200m runner in the country. "But after the heats, we knew it would go again. Still, nobody expected a 10.09. That felt like Indian sprinting taking a giant leap in one moment."

For Gurindervir, the rise is not overnight. Like all of India's current leading sprinters -- including Animesh and Unnathi -- his breakthrough has come after joining the Reliance Foundation programme under British coach James Hillier. It is a transition that even his formative coach Sarabjeet Singh, fondly known as 'Happy sir', acknowledges with rare candour.

"We can identify talent, we can build them to a level, but there comes a point where you have to let them go to better systems," says Sarabjeet. "When you see a boy like Gurindervir running 10.09, it tells you that access to better facilities and modern coaching matters. As coaches, we should focus on finding the next one instead of holding on."

That statement underpins Hillier's programme, which has steadily reshaped Indian sprinting since its post-pandemic emergence. The early signs came with Amlan Borgohain's 10.25 (though not ratified as national record at that time) and Jyothi Yarraji's rise in women's 100m hurdles in 2022. From the High-Performance Centre in Bhubaneswar to its current base in Navi Mumbai, the system has evolved into a sprint hub for elite development.

Yarraji's journey -- becoming India's first sub-13 hurdler and going on to win multiple Asian titles in an event where the country never medalled -- drew attention to the programme. Soon, a steady stream of talent followed with the likes of Animesh, Manikanta Hoblidhar, hurdler Tejas Shirse and others began rewriting national benchmarks while younger athletes like Krishik M, Unnathi entered the fold and rapidly improved.

Within that environment, the gains are rarely accidental as the results are built long before race day. "When you are surrounded by athletes who are pushing every day, you don't really think about records in that moment," says Gurindervir. "When I broke the record in the semifinal, I was genuinely cheering for Animesh in the next race because I knew if he runs faster, I will have to come back stronger.

"I always wanted to be in a group where everyone is improving. Here, if someone finds a weakness in your race, they will tell you. If someone does something better, you learn from it. That environment keeps you honest and keeps you improving," adds the 25-year-old runner.

For others in the system, the transformation is equally striking. "When I joined, the first thing my coach (Hillier) told me was to trust the programme and trust myself," says Karnataka's 110m hurdler Krishik. "I didn't try to overthink anything after that. I just followed what was being given, and over time, I realised that everything we were doing had a purpose. Nothing here is random, every performance is prepared long before you see it on the track.

The difference lies in detail.

"Earlier, I was training without a clear structure. I didn't understand nutrition properly, recovery was basic, and even gym work wasn't targeted. Here, everything is specific. We work on explosive strength, on mechanics, on how to use the power we already have. It's not about working more, it's about working right," says Tumakuru-born Krishik, who has emerged as neck-to-neck rival to record holder Tejas this season.

That clarity extends beyond training sessions as athletes are exposed to a rhythm of competition that builds both confidence and consistency.

"We don't overthink races anymore," Krishik says. "Our coach tells us, you are meant to run, so just run. We travel, compete, come back and train again. That cycle builds so much confidence that you feel ready at any time. It's like your body already knows what to do."

The ecosystem around the athletes reinforces this approach. Strength and conditioning experts, nutritionists, physiotherapists, and medical specialists work in tandem, ensuring that progress is sustained and not sporadic. "It's a team work. I can't say it's just me improving. The coach, the S&C team, everyone contributes. I just trusted the system, and the system delivered," says Krishik.

That holistic structure is also reshaping the broader athletics ecosystem as the impact extends beyond athletes' performances, as pointed out by Hassan, the programme's former cohert manager. Country's talent identification, coaching methods and even competition strategies are evolving through exposure to such programmes. It is in many ways a slow but steady recalibration of how Indian athletics operates today in a system where results are crucial for it to thrive in the long term. The journey, however, hasn't been without setbacks.

The baton exchange issues at the World Relays in Botswana earlier this year exposed gaps while injuries and false starts added to concerns. Yet, Hillier was not among the ones who panicked.

"Mistakes are part of development," he says. "What matters is how you respond; having tough conversations, learning from it, and moving forward. We don't separate success and failure; both are part of the same journey. The key is to make sure every setback contributes to growth."

If Botswana raised questions, the Federation Cup offered answers as the same group that faltered collectively returned to push each other to unprecedented heights. Still, the road ahead remains steep.

Running sub-10 seconds is itself an arduous task but doing it consistently on the global stage is another. Indian athletics, barring exceptions like Neeraj Chopra, has yet to make a significant impact at World Championships or Olympics. While the accusation is often that athletes do well in familiar conditions, the gap with the elite remains substantial at the same time.

That narrative may shift if the current bunch of sprinters take their improvement to elite level in a blue ribband event like 100. A sub-10 run at a global event may not guarantee medals but it would mark a psychological breakthrough; a proof that Indian sprinters belong in that conversation. And if Seville is right, it might just take one runner to break through, for the rest to follow.

Indian men's 100m progression (2016-2026)

10.26s	Amiya Kumar Mallick	Federation Cup (New Delhi) (Apr 28, 2016)
10.23s	Manikanta Hoblidhar	National Open Athletics (Bengaluru) (Oct 11, 2023)
10.20s	Gurindervir Singh	Indian Grand Prix 1 (Bengaluru) (Mar 28, 2025)
10.18s	Animesh Kujur	Intl Sprint & Relays event (Vari, Greece) (Jul 5, 2025)
10.17s	Gurindervir Singh	Federation Cup (Ranchi) Semifinal (May 22, 2026)
10.15s	Animesh Kujur	Federation Cup (Ranchi) Semifinal 2 (May 22, 2026)
10.09s	Gurindervir Singh	Federation Cup (Ranchi) Final (May 23, 2026)

(From left): Gurindervir Singh, Amlan Borgohain, Manikanta Hoblidar and Animesh Kujur are among runners shaping India's sprint future.

IN BRIEF

Babu brace in HFHC win

▸ Dilli Babu scored a brace as Hindustan Friends Hockey Club beat Metro Hockey Club 2-1 in the KSHA Super Division Hockey League Championship on Saturday, reports DHNS.

Results: Raichur District Hockey Association: 2 (Babu Metkar 9th, 49th) bt Karnataka Forest Department: 0; Hindustan Friends Hockey Club: 2 (Dilli Babu 34th, 37th) bt Metro Hockey Club: 1 (Kabilan 15th).

Jyoti, Aakash in India squad

▸ Jyoti Gulia and Aakash were on Saturday added to the Indian squad in the 48kg and 75kg categories respectively for the World Boxing Cup Stage 2 in Guiyang, China beginning on Monday, reports PTI from New Delhi.

This is a second-string Indian squad comprising boxers who finished runners-up in the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games trials last month.

Squads: Men: Rishi S (50kg), Nikhil (55kg), Anmol (60kg), Abhinash Jamwal (65kg), Deepak (70kg), Aakash (75kg), Malsawmtluanga (80kg), Jugnoo (85kg), Harsh Choudhary (90kg), Sawan G (+90kg).**Women:** Jyoti (48 kg), Minakshi (51kg), Poonam (54 kg), Prachi (57 kg), Mahi Lama (60 kg), Saneh (65 kg), Gitimoni G (70 kg), Sanamacha C (75 kg), Naina (80 kg), Alfiya Tarannum Akram Khan Pathan (+80 kg)

Hockey trials for Jr boys

▸ Hockey Karnataka will conduct selection trials to pick the state junior men's team for the 16th Hockey India Junior Men's National Championship, to be held in Coimbatore, from July 28 to August 8, reports DHNS.

Players born on or after January 1, 2007, will be eligible to take part in the trials. It will be held at the Field Marshal KM Cariappa Hockey Arena on June 20 from 9.30 am.

Lakshytosh steers FCB home

BENGALURU, DHNS: Lakshytosh Joshi netted a hat-trick while Nehgoumng Guite scored a brace as FC Bengaluru trounced Noel Wilson FC 8-0 in the KSFA C Division League Championship at the Bangalore Football Stadium here on Saturday.

LOCAL FOOTBALL

Results: C Division: Group C: FX FC Bangalore: 3 (Vusmay D 29th, Kavarsau S 31st, Nagesh 54th pen) bt United Aces FC: 1 (Vishal Kumar 25th); BM FC: 0 drew with Play Smart FC: 0
Group D: FC Bengaluru: 8 (Lakshytosh Joshi 14th, 20th, 26th, Chandan Kumar Thakur 23rd, Nehgoumng Guite 29th, 58th, Roshish Sing Bartwal 41st, Miibodo Yiring 44th) bt Noel Wilson FC: 0; Bangalore Champs FC: 4 (Sandeep D 12th own goal, Ramaswamy 35th, 50th, Abhijith Solomon 58th own goal.)
D Division: Sportshood FC: 2 (Younas 13th, Anandu 17th) bt Pass FC: 1 (Enet star Nongbet 45th); Karnataka Sports Network FC: 3 (Manjunatha K 10th, 12th, Kithin P 29th) bt Basaveshwara FC: 0.

◆ ON TV ◆

CRICKET
Women's T20 WC: Bangladesh vs Netherlands **(3 pm)**, India vs Pakistan **(7 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network, JioHotstar.**

FOOTBALL
World Cup: Haiti vs Scotland **(6:30 am)**, Australia vs Turkiye **(9:30 am)**, Germany vs Curacao **(10:30 pm)**, Netherlands vs Japan **(1:30 am, Monday)**, Ivory Coast vs Ecuador **(4:30 am, Monday)**. **LIVE** on **Unite8 Sports, Zee App.**

HOCKEY
FIH Pro League: Netherlands vs India **(7:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network, JioHotstar.**

BADMINTON
Australian Open: Final **(8:30 am)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network, JioHotstar.**

MOTORSPORT
Formula 1: Barcelona-Catalunya GP **(main race, 6:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **FanCode, F1TV Pro.**

ARCHERY
World Cup Stage 3: Recurve Team finals **(12:30 pm)**, Recurve mixed team and individual finals **(4:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Network.**

CRICKET FIRST ODI

Bowlers, Gill set up India's win

Brar, Dubey impress as hosts prevail in truncated game

Gurnoor Brar (left) claimed three wickets on ODI debut while skipper Shubman Gill struck an unbeaten 84 as India cantered to a seven-wicket win against Afghanistan in Dharamsala on Saturday. PTI

SIDNEY KIRAN
DHARAMSALA, DHNS

As promised, Afghanistan brought the fight to the Indians in a rain-curtailed opening ODI but the hosts packed far too much ammunition with the brilliance of skipper Shubman Gill steering them to a comfortable win here on Saturday.

After Afghanistan opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz's scintillating 51-ball 102 (8x4, 8x6) lifted the doom and gloom that had descended upon the scenic HPCA Stadium here following heavy rain and persistent drizzle that reduced the contest to 25 overs a side, Gill extended his fabulous form over the last couple of months with a measured unbeaten 84 as India scripted a 7-wicket victory.

Chasing a tricky target of 195 in nippy conditions where the pacers got the odd ball to swing and the spinners found some turn and bounce, India, the reigning T20 world champions, employed the traditional way of methodical chasing to scale it down, albeit a hiccup here or there, rather effortlessly.

Gill, who scored 732 runs in the just-concluded IPL and followed it up with a 126 in the one-off Test versus Afghanistan, started cautiously along with his opening partner Rohit Sharma. The duo played the odd big shot but chose them wisely as both found timing hard to come by early on. Just when Rohit was getting into the groove, a mix-up with Gill cost him his wicket.

While Rohit appeared livid, the arrival of Ishan Kishan (34, 22b), another form player, changed the tempo of the Indian innings. He took on the bowlers from the get-go and that confidence rubbed onto Gill as well, the skipper slowly shifting his gears.

Afghanistan pulled things back with the quick dismissal of Kishan and Shreyas Iyer but Gill remained focussed until the end. He found the right ally in the seasoned KL Rahul (39 n.o., 19b) as they anchored the chase without any further trouble.

If Afghanistan were able to test India in reaching a competitive total, they owed a massive thanks to the brilliance of opener Gurbaz, who smashed his ninth ODI century. Treating the game like a T20 affair, Gurbaz went hammer and tongs right out of the blocks to knock the stuffing out of the Indians.

Despite being rocked by early dismissals that saw an overly aggressive Afghanistan being reduced to 3/26 in the fifth over, Gurbaz opted to live by the sword. A strong bottom-handed batter, he was brutal square of the wicket, cutting anything slightly wide or pulling all the short balls. At the same time, however, he was exceptional down the wicket too, dishing out those lofted shots and inside-out hits with a dash of arrogance. He was particularly harsh on pacer Prasidh Krishna and never allowed spinners Harsh Dubey and Washington Sundar to settle into any rhythm.

The way he was going, alongside Hashmatullah Shahidi (27) in the 116-run stand for the fourth wicket, Afghanistan seemed on course to reach 250. But his dismissal to a peach by Nitish Kumar Reddy in the 16th over dented their hopes. India kept plugging away with the wickets to ensure they didn't have to chase anything in the dangerous territory.

A word of praise needs to be showered on HPCA, whose installation of the Sub-Air drainage system ensured a truncated game could take place. It trained heavily here till noon and persistent drizzle followed till 4.00 pm with the covers coming off only at 4:40 pm. The excellent drainage system — same as the one at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium — allowed the match to kick off an hour after as fans, who braved the rain, walked off happily in the end.

SCOREBOARD

AFGHANISTAN
Gurbaz b Nitish 102 (51b, 8x4, 8x6)
Zadran c Gill b Brar 1 (4b)
Atal lbw Arshdeep 0 (2b)
Shah c Dubey b Arshdeep 3 (8b)
Shahidi c Rahul b Dubey 27 (30b, 3x4)
Omarzai st Kishan b Dubey 26 (16b, 3x6)
Nabi c Arshdeep b Nitish 9 (14b, 1x6)
Rashid b Brar 9 (13b, 2x4)
Ghazanfar c Gill b Dubey 0 (2b)
Rahman c Arshdeep b Brar 4 (8b, 1x4)
Saleem (not out) 1 (1b)
Extras (B-1, LB-7, W-4) 12
TOTAL (all out, 24.5 overs) 194
Fall of wickets: 1-13 (Zadran), 2-16 (Atal), 3-26 (Shah), 4-142 (Gurbaz), 5-144 (Shahidi), 6-172 (Nabi), 7-182 (Omarzai), 8-182 (Ghazanfar), 9-193 (Rashid).
Bowling: Arshdeep 5-0-27-2 (w-1), Brar 4.5-0-27-3 (w-1), Prasidh 5-0-35-0 (w-1), Dubey 5-0-47-3, Sundar 1-0-19-0, Nitish 4-0-31-2 (w-1).

INDIA
Rohit (run out) 16 (16b, 2x4, 1x6)
Gill (not out) 84 (66b, 11x4, 2x6)
Kishan b Rashid 34 (22b, 3x4, 1x6)
Shreyas c Saleem b Rahman 12 (15b, 1x4)
Rahul (not out) 39 (19b, 4x4, 3x6)
Extras (LB-1, NB-1, W-8) 10
TOTAL (for 3 wkts, 22.5 overs) .. 195
Fall of wickets: 1-46 (Rohit), 2-116 (Kishan), 3-142 (Shreyas).
Bowling: Omarzai 3-0-28-0 (w-2, nb-1), Rahman 4-0-39-1, Ghazanfar 5-0-28-0, Saleem 3.5-0-36-0 (w-2), Rashid 5-0-37-1, Nabi 2-0-26-0.
Result: India won by 7 wkts.
PoM: Shubman Gill.
Series: India lead 3-match series 1-0. **Second ODI:** June 17 (Lucknow).

India brace for tricky test

ODI champs will bank on batting vs arch-rivals Pakistan

BIRMINGHAM, PTI

A well-balanced India will need openers Smriti Mandhana and Shafali Verma to fire from all cylinders against a tricky Pakistan to make a bright beginning to their campaign in the ICC Women's T20 World Cup here on Sunday.

Led by Harmanpreet Kaur, India are looking to add a second global title to their showcase after winning the 50-over version last year, and the head-to-head stats heavily favours them against cross-border rivals.

India enjoy an overwhelming 13-3 lead in the shortest format, and, in fact, their previous meeting was in 2024 T20 World Cup in Dubai, which India won by six wickets.

From that day, India have grown into a more consistent and robust white ball unit, which is reflected in their ODI World Cup victory, and almost the same squad will lead India's quest for a T20 crown.

India have been in reasonable form too in the run-up to the event.

They have beaten Australia (2-1) and England (3-2) away from home, while drubbing Sri Lanka (5-0) at home, underlining their all-weather abilities.

However, they also received timely wake-up calls during their defeats to South Africa (4-1) and England (2-1) in away series.

India will hope openers Smriti Mandhana and Shafali Verma (above) to get them off to a good start against Pakistan on Sunday. REUTERS

India v Pakistan in T20Is

	Mats	Ind	Pak
Overall	16	13	3
In T20 World Cups	8	6	2

LIVE 7:00 PM

Aus ease past SA to send early warning

MANCHESTER, AGENCIES: Georgia Wareham made both the bat and ball talk to help Australia begin their Women's T20 World Cup campaign on a rousing note. The favourites beat South Africa by 65 runs in the opener at Old Trafford here on Saturday.

Phoebe Litchfield's half-century (50) followed by Ellyse Perry's 36 and Wareham's 32 took the favourites to 172 for 8 in 20 overs. Later, Wareham got into the act with the ball by claiming 3/13 as the South African chase ended at 107 all out in 16.4 overs.

Brief scores: Australia: 172/8 in 20 overs (Phoebe Litchfield 50, Ellyse Perry 36, Georgia Wareham 32; Ayabonga Khaka 2-33, Nonkululeko Mlaba 2-22, Nadine de Klerk 2-35) bt South Africa: 107 all out in 16.4 overs (Laura Wolvaardt 44, Nadine de Klerk 25; Sophie Molineux 2-17, Alana King 2-26, Georgia Wareham 3-13). **Result:** Aus won by 65 runs. **PoM:** Georgia Wareham.
England: 219/1 in 20 overs (Amy Jones 53, Danni Wyatt-Hodge 105 n.o., Nat Sciver-Brunt 46 n.o.) bt Sri Lanka: 132 all out in 20 overs (Harshitha Samarawickrama 29, Nilakshika Silva 39; Charlie Dean 2-18, Sophie Eccleston 2-27, Freya Kemp 4-22). **Result:** England won by 87 runs. **PoM:** Danni Wyatt-Hodge.

Sindhu goes down to Yamaguchi in semifinals

SYDNEY, PTI: Double Olympic medallist PV Sindhu's wait for a BWF title continued as she bowed out in the semifinals of the Australian Badminton Open after a straight-game defeat to top seed Akane Yamaguchi of Japan, here on Saturday.

The former world No. 1, who was seeded third here, put up a spirited fight in the opening game and even held a game point before going down 20-22, 12-21 to the world No. 3 Japanese player in a 43-minute contest.

With Sindhu's exit, India's campaign in the tournament also came to an end in the BWF World Tour Super 500 tournament.

Sindhu matched Yamaguchi shot for shot in a closely-fought first game.

Both players enjoyed runs of six consecutive points each, but the Indian failed to convert her game point as Yamaguchi held her nerve to take the opener.

The momentum shifted decisively in the second game.

Yamaguchi raced ahead with an eight-point burst to go 13-6 up and maintained solid control throughout to seal the match without any fuss.

The Japanese will now take on Thailand's Pornpawee Chochuwong in the women's singles title clash.

The defeat continued Sindhu's recent struggles against Yamaguchi. Although the Indian still leads their head-to-head record 15-13, she has now lost five of their last six meetings.

A BWF Tour title has remained elusive for Sindhu since her triumph at the Syed Modi International.

PV Sindhu

Vultures CC emerge YSR Memorial Trophy winners

BENGALURU, DHNS: Aneeshwar Gautam's hundred went in vain as an all-round Vultures Cricket Club beat Swastic Union Cricket Club (2) by 12 runs (VJD method) to emerge champions of the KSCA YS Ramaswamy Memorial Trophy for Group I- I, II, III division and qualifiers from IV, V division clubs tournament at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium.

SUCC (2) posted 307/7 in 50 overs, thanks to Aneeshwar 156 (128b, 16x4, 2x6). In reply, Karun Nair (69) and Shrijith KL (54 n.o.) took them to 152/2 before rain played spoilsport.

Brief scores: Swastic Union Cricket Club (2): 307/7 in 50 overs (Aneeshwar Gautam 156, Gaurov Shanbhag 55; Santokh Singh 2-56, Shikhar Shetty 2-40) lt to Vultures Cricket Club: 152/2 in 25.5 overs (Karun Nair 69, Shrijith KL 54 n.o.) (After the first rain interruption, the target was revised to 263 in 39 overs.)

Vultures Cricket Club, winners of the YS Ramaswamy Memorial Trophy in Bengaluru on Saturday. STANDING (from left): Karthikeya KP, Santok Singh, Srujan Nandan, Manikanth Shivanand, Shikhar Shetty, Kruthik Krishna, Rahul Bellad, Aaditya Nair, Dhanush Gowda, Yashwant. SITTING (from left): Karun Nair, Pravin Dubey, Shrijith KL (captain), Rahul Menon (Secretary), Smaran R, Abhishek Ahlawat.

BCCI not to intervene over foreign players availability

DHARAMSALA, PTI: The BCCI has no plans to act as a bridge between overseas players and their respective teams over their availability for the IPL despite concerns being raised by franchises in the recently concluded edition.

The BCCI has a ban in place for foreign recruits who pull out of the tournament after being bought in the auction, but player availability over the two-month long IPL still remains an issue.

"The team are the custodians of the players. We leave it to them and their understanding with the players. Some players decide IPL over national duty and some vice versa. Our rules are clear unless there is an injury (the two-year ban)," a BCCI source said.

The BCCI plans to increase the number of games from 74 to 94 from the 2028 season.

B'luru's Anvitha grabs title

BENGALURU, DHNS

Tied at a three-day total of 209, youngster Anvitha Narender and seasoned campainer Vani Kapoor headed to the playoff to decide the winner on the final day of the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour Leg 7 event in Mysuru on Saturday.

After both the golfers made pars on the first hole, Vani hitting her approach shot over the green in the second hole spelt doom as Anvitha made a regulation birdie to walk away with the trophy at the Jayachamaraja Wadiyar Golf Course.

Anvitha Narender.
DH PHOTO/ HAMPA NAGARAJ

This was the 20-year-old's second title on Tour after turning pro in 2024.

Bengaluru's Anvitha carded one-under 69 on the final day after rounds of 72 and 68.

Vani, on the other hand, will take solace in shooting the best score of the week when the Delhi pro ended with a six-under 64 following rounds of 72 and 73.

Final standings (after 54 holes): 209: Anvitha Narender (72, 68, 69), Vani Kapoor (72, 73, 64); **210:** Riya Jadon (67, 73, 70); **212:** Khushi Khanijau (72, 72, 68), Vidhatri Urs (69, 73, 70), Amandeep Drall (70, 72, 70).

Shirse breaks own national record, Sachin to miss CWG

LUDHIANA, PTI: Tejas Shirse broke his own men's 110m hurdles national record with a stunning run during the Indian Athletics Series 9 here on Saturday.

The 24-year-old Shirse, representing Reliance Foundation, ran 13.27 seconds -- the sixth best of the season in Asia -- to better his previous national record of 13.41 seconds he had clocked in 2024.

He also bettered the Commonwealth Games qualifying mark of 13.39 seconds set by the Athletics Federation of India.

Meanwhile, World Championships finalist javelin thrower Sachin Yadav is set to miss the upcoming Commonwealth Games in Glasgow as he skipped the event here.

Yadav has not breached the CWG qualifying mark of 82.61m set by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI). His best this season was the 81.95m.

Rohit Yadav (83.76m) and Yashvir Singh (82.93m) were achieved the CWG mark.

Oliver wins main event

BENGALURU RESULTS

Pesi Shroff-trained Oliver, ridden by Vivek G, won the Justice P Medapa Memorial Trophy, the feature event of the races on Saturday.

1. The Snow Dew Plate (Div II) - 1400M: Jolie's Star (Srinivasa M) Antony Raj 1, Ransomware Rajesh Kumar) 2, Whitney (Ryan Ahmed) 3, Diesel (A Sandesh) 4. WB: 3-1/2, 1/2, 1-3/4. T: 1:30.84. Tote: Rs 27 (w) 10, 18, 26 p; Shp: Rs 53; Thp: Rs 51; Fc: Rs 220; Q: Rs 148; Tri: Rs 1381 & 704; Exp: Rs 4365 & 935.
TB: Kishan Thomas; Fav: Diesel.
2. The Sir Cecil Plate (Div II) - 1200M: River Deep (Md Minhaj Raza) Ashhad Asbar 1, Absolute Katrina (Sai Kiran) 2, Flash (Bhawani Singh) 3, Glorious Spectre (Vishal Shivhare) 4. WB: 3-1/4, Lnk, 2-3/4. T: 1:15.73. Tote: Rs 21:(w) 20, 16,18 p; Shp: Rs 45; Thp: Rs 38; Fc: Rs 97; Q: Rs 51; Tri: Rs 262 & 165; Exp: Rs 1710 & 651. TB: V Lokanath; Fav: River Deep.
3. The Snow Dew Plate (Div I) - 1400M: Agrima (Nirash Bothara and M Eshwer) Laxman Singh 1, Palma (JH Arul) 2, Ice Queen (BL Paswan) 3, Hold Your Breath (Rajesh Kumar) 4. WB: 13-3/4, 2-3/4, 5-1/4. T: 1:29.80. Tote: Rs 33 (w) 12, 17, 18 p; Shp: Rs 52; Thp: Rs 39; Fc: Rs 511; Q: Rs 252; Tri: Rs 2536 & 2174; Exp: Rs 67,481 C/F. TB: M Eshwer; Fav: Ice Queen.
4. The Meydan Plate - 1200M: Money Bags (Capt Jamshed Appoo, Manoj Kumar, K Kaliyaperumal and J Ramesh) Antony Raj 1, Efficacy (Akshay Kumar) 1, Ricardo (Aleemuddin) 2, Star Glory (Yash Narredu) 4. WB: 6, 3/4, 2-1/2. T: 1:13.97. Tote: Rs 14 (w) 10, 16, 22 p; Shp: Rs 21; Thp: Rs 39; Fc: Rs 25; Q: Rs 20; Tri: Rs 84 & 63; Exp: Rs 211 & 95. TB: P Prasanna Kumar; Fav: Money Bags.
5. The Justice P Medapa Memorial Trophy - 1600M: Oliver (Joydeep Datta Gupta, Ritu Puri, Sanjay Datta Gupta, Debasish Mishra, Milan Luthria and Avinash Gupta) Vivek G 1, Badshaah (Sai Kiran) 1, Sassy Sarah (Akshay Kumar) 3, Star Of India (Neeraj Rawal) 4. WB: Snk, 1-1/2, 7. T: 1:40.61. Tote: Rs 18 (w) 12, 48, 13 p; Shp: Rs 156; Thp: Rs 44; Fc: Rs 686; Q: Rs 406; Tri: Rs 1527 & 218; Exp: Rs 4110 & 1908. TB: P Shroff; Fav: Oliver.
6. The Dharmaprakasha L S Venkaji Rao Memorial Trophy - 1600M: Pearl Star (Ashok Ranpise, Daulat Chhabria, DT Racing, Cherie Sports, Manoj Kumar and Saleem A Jasdanwalla) Akshay Kumar 1, Sprezzature (A Sandesh) 2, Theos (Hindu Singh) 3, Haboob (RN Darshan) 4. WB: 8, 6-3/4, 2-3/4. T:1:41.15. Tote: Rs 13, (w) 10, 16 p; Shp: Rs 21; Thp: Rs 30; Fc: Rs 26; Q: Rs 21; Tri: Rs 108 & 52; Exp: Rs 454 & 253. TB: P Prasanna Kumar; Fav: Pearl Star.
7. The Sir Cecil Plate (Div I) - 1200M: Breeze Bluster (Srinath Byregowda, Divya Jyothi, CM Campa Sharath and Rakesh Kumar) Vishal 1, II Volo (Rajesh Kumar) 2, Carat Love (Mukesh Kumar) 3, Star Comet (Akshay Kumar) 4. WB: Shd, Snk, Shd. T: 1:16.46. Tote: Rs 111 (w) 22, 15, 16 p; Shp: Rs 33; Thp: Rs 50; Fc: Rs 681; Q: Rs 293; Tri: Rs 3118 & 844; Exp: Rs 14,095 & 8054. TB: V Lokanath; Fav: Noble Cause.
Jackpot: Rs 2436 & 85. **Mini Jackpot:** Rs 753. **I treble:** Rs 133. **II treble:** Rs 464.

Margaretta for feature

BENGALURU SELECTIONS

Pesi Shroff-trained Margaretta, to be ridden by Vivek G, will be the favourite to win the Zavaray S Poonawalla Fillies Championship Stakes, the feature event of the races here on Sunday.
The first race starts at 1:30 pm.
1. The Kranji Plate -- 2000M: Stalingrad 1, Azalea 2, Fils De France 3.
2. The Malenahalli Plate -- 1600M: Santorius 1, Turkoman 2, Tyaaraa, 3.
3. The Treasure Girl Plate -- 1100M: Atman 1, Garzian 2, Ravishing Queen 3.
4. The Parsiana Plate -- 1400M: D Fronx 1, Aquastic 2, Double Vision 3.
5. Stewards Cup -- 1400M: Elysium 2, Star Studded 2, Stellantis 3.
6. The Zavaray S Poonawalla Fillies Championship Stakes -- 1600M: Margaretta 1, Starzella 2, Havoc 3.
7. The World Blood Donor Day -- 1200M: Perfect Legend 1, Gloriousness 2, Flaming Sword 3.
8. The Richelieu Plate -- 1400M: Regal Aristocracy 1, Lots Of Luck 2, Thrill Of Brazil 3.
Day's best: Elysium. **Jackpot:** 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7. **Mini jackpot:** 4, 5, 6 & 7. **I treble:** 3, 4 & 5. **II treble:** 5, 6 & 7.

Satwik-Chirag, Sindhu for Asiad

NEW DELHI, PTI: Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu and reigning men's doubles champion Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty will headline the Indian badminton squad at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games.

The Badminton Association of India (BAI) selection committee finalised the squad after reviewing recent performances across national and international tournaments, alongside BWF rankings as of May 26.

Led by Lakshya Sen, the squad also features HS Prannoy and former world no 1 Kidambi Srikanth.

The squad (Team Championship): Men: Lakshya Sen, Ayush Shetty, H S Prannoy, Kidambi Srikanth, Tharun Mannepalli, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, Chirag Shetty, Hariharan Amsakarunan, M R Arjun, Dhruv Kapila.
Women: P V Sindhu, Unnati Hooda, Devika Sihag, Tanvi Sharma, Isharani Baruah, Treesa Jolly, Gayatri Gopichand Pullela, Kavipriya Selvam, Simran Singhi, Tanisha Crasto.
Individual Championship: Men's singles: Lakshya Sen, Ayush Shetty. **Women's singles**: PV Sindhu, Unnati Hooda. **Men's doubles**: Satwiksairaj Rankireddy / Chirag Shetty; Hariharan Amsakarunan / M R Arjun. **Women's doubles**: Treesa Jolly /Gayatri Gopichand Pullela; Kavipriya Selvam /Simran Singhi. **Mixed doubles**: Dhruv Kapila / Tanisha Crasto.

Russell claims Barcelona pole

MONTMELO (SPAIN), AFP: George Russell of Mercedes claimed pole position for the Barcelona-Catalunya Grand Prix after a thrilling end to the qualifying session on Saturday.

Lewis Hamilton will be on the second row ahead of Kimi Antonelli.

THE Z FACTOR

A biryani, a tasteless joke, and India's aversion to reform

Mohamed Zeeshan
is a student of all things global and, self-confessedly, master of none, notwithstanding his Columbia Master's, a stint with the UN and with monarchs in the Middle East

@profzeesays

Last week, a 22-year-old man in Gurugram went viral on the internet after making a tasteless joke about a biryani date at a stand-up comedy show. As I watched the controversy unfold, I could not help but reflect on the ironies and paradoxes it contained.

In one sense, a stand-up comedy show in Gurugram should embody a modern, globalised, and urban India. This is where young, educated, working professionals, who have grown up in a deeply serious and somewhat uptight country, come for a laugh. The laughter is intended to be an act of rebellion against society's rigid norms.

Yet, the joke the young man cracked reflected in the worst way possible the most repressive norms practised in Indian society – rolling up sexism, objectification, and materialism, all in one.

In the aftermath of the joke, the authorities and critics fixated on the individual, filed criminal charges against him, and even went after his employer. One political leader scolded him for "violating societal boundaries".

But what the leader missed mentioning is that the young man did, in fact, accurately represent some of the country's most widely practised societal norms: that romantic relationships are implicitly transactional, and that when the man brings money to the table, he is entitled to extract whatever he wills from his woman.

For several married women in India, this is their lived reality. Young women are pulled out of colleges and married off before they have the chance to secure their own financial independence. They become beholden to their husbands and their families. The girl's own parents consider her a liability in turn. That is why dowry, marital rape, and domestic abuse remain live issues in Indian courts and in its Parliament.

Ordinarily, when a controversy such as this hits the internet, people outrage and fume for a couple of weeks and then promptly move on. Already, the man in question has been fired from his job, and the comedian who hosted him has left social media, meaning the fumes will soon dissipate.

But that's the easy way out. If India is serious about solving the longstanding problems underneath, its society must introspect candidly and self-critically.

That is the hard part that no one is ready for. In contemporary Indian society, any attempt to criticise problematic social practices is met with a forceful and visceral firewall.

Last month, when a Norwegian journalist asked an Indian diplomat about human rights concerns in India, the diplomat promptly retorted that India is a 5,000-year-old civili*sati*on. Closer to home, when young activists vent their frustrations, they are termed "cockroaches". When young couples fight for the marriage they want – across religious or caste lines, or even for different traditions and rituals within the same community – they often must elope or sometimes be killed.

All of these are gross overreactions of differing scales, but they all betray a deep-seated belief: that the reputation of a society, community or country must be actively defended, and that any criticism of its practices or norms represents a threat to its very existence.

By extending this logic, members of the society, community or country must also be forced to stay in line, because if they fall out of line, then these practices and norms would eventually die.

In truth, a good social norm, belief system, or practice does not need to be actively defended; it defends itself because it is logical, fulfilling, and meaningful to follow.

The retrenched sexist attitude betrayed by the biryani joke is also enabled by the same social firewall. Conservative voices often claim that they are curtailing the ambitions, careers or educations of young women to protect traditional family values from corrosive Western influences. Yet, by disempowering women and making it impossible to question or challenge the *status quo*, they also stamp out the social reform which is necessary to move past sexism and misogyny.

In all fairness, this is not really the Indian way. BR Ambedkar fought against the caste system in the country by questioning mainstream religious beliefs. Raja Ram Mohan Roy followed the same revolutionary path to wage war on *sati* and child marriage. Swami Vivekananda posed the same existential questions to society when he campaigned against untouchability and for women's rights.

All these men are today India's heroes. Perhaps India still has it in it to produce one more of them. And then another. And then yet another.

SARKARI SECRETS

State of unequal privilege

Last week, Hungary's MPs unanimously approved legislation to drastically reduce their salaries and allowances. Barely a month after being sworn in, Prime Minister Peter Magyar delivered on this electoral promise. While the MPs will be paid 40% lesser than before, the PM's pay will be cut by more than half. European media have calculated that his predecessor was earning almost 13 times more than the average national wage.

This side of the Danube, a day after PM Magyar assumed office, we were advised to adopt austerity measures to conserve forex reserves that are depleting rapidly due to the economic hardships arising from the United States-Israel-Iran conflict. We must resume working from home, avoid unnecessary foreign travel, use public transport, buy gold sparingly, limit the use of fertilisers, and even reduce our consumption of cooking oil. Soon came the indispensable tour of five countries. Will our ministers and MPs, 90% of whom are self-declared *crorepatis*, "*tighten de belten*" (like Chaplin's Great Dictator demanded sacrifices from his people in the fictional country of Tomania) to lead by example? This is a question hardly anyone has asked publicly.

Forget emulating such good practices from the European Union, with whom we have the 'mother of all trade deals', the distance between our Parliament and us is increasingly widening. First, not too long ago, the majority of MPs voted to erase the parity between them and us for accessing official information through the RTI when they passed the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act. Now, the Parliament's secretariats are telling us we do not have the right to know the details of the recently rejected attempts to impeach the current Chief Election Commissioner.

Despite widespread media reporting on the twin notices of the impeachment motion submitted by the Opposition MPs, in March this year, nobody outside Parliament seems to have actually seen their contents. After it was publicly announced in April that the Lok Sabha Speaker and the Rajya Sabha Chairman had rejected these notices, I submitted two identical RTI applications to the respective secretariats.

Venkatesh Nayak
wakes up every morning thinking someone somewhere is hiding something

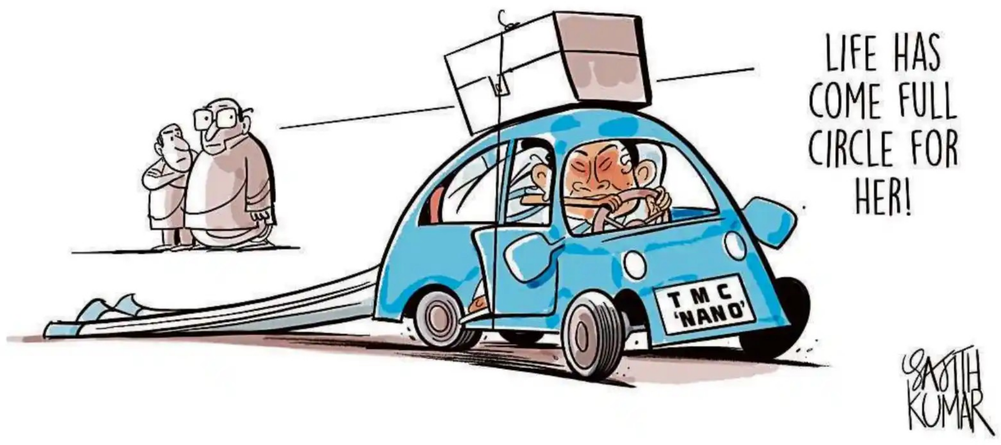
I sought copies of the notices of motion submitted, the rejection orders issued by the respective heads of the Houses, the name and designation of all persons they consulted as required under Section 3(1) of The Judges Inquiry Act (which applies in this case), the opinions they received, the text of the materials consulted by the Speaker and the Chairman as required by the procedure laid down, and all correspondence and file notings generated during the decision-making process. The respective public information officers merely replied that none of this information can be disclosed under Section 8(1)(c) of the RTI Act. Neither of them signed their replies.

The exemption clause they invoked is crafted to prevent information disclosure from causing "a breach of privilege of Parliament or the State Legislature." It is the least frequently used ground for rejecting RTI applications. The Union ministries used it only 39 times in 2024-25. Neither House Secretariat used it even once, according to their annual implementation reports.

Articles 105(2) and 194(2) of our Constitution immunise our MPs, MLAs, and MLCs from criminal liability for words spoken or votes given in the legislature or in its committees. According to Kaul and Shakder's compendium of parliamentary practice and procedure, successive committees on privileges and committees of speakers have held that these and other privileges are granted to them for performing their appointed duties without hindrance. These privileges do not place them on a footing different from that of ordinary citizens vis-à-vis the application of any law. The fundamental principle is that all citizens, including MPs, must be treated equally in the eyes of the law unless there are sufficient reasons in the interest of Parliament itself to do otherwise. MPs cannot claim any privilege higher than those enjoyed by the people who elect them.

Given this foundational philosophy of parliamentary privileges, how does the disclosure of information sought through RTI hurt Parliament's interests or prevent MPs from doing their job? The matter relating to this batch of impeachment motion notices is complete because they stand rejected. Whose vested interests are being protected now?

We elect our MPs and annually finance the expenditure incurred by Parliament and the Election Commission. Yet, *babus* are claiming that records on the allegations levelled against the head of the entity conducting those very elections are *sarkari* secrets! This is the latest irony in the world's largest democracy.



DHARMA

How the *Bhagavad Gita* invented sattvic food

Social media is awash with debates between the "sattvic food" lobby and the "protein food" lobby, with influencers casually invoking ancient terminology to justify dietary choices. Yet most participants in these arguments remain unaware of a fundamental truth: the concept of *sattva* did not originate in the Vedas or Ayurvedic texts, but in the *Bhagavad Gita*. Apparently, Krishna gave dietary advice just before the war.

Indian philosophical vocabulary did not arrive fully formed in a single moment. Roughly 3,000 years ago, the Vedic hymns consolidated themselves, with no *Ramayana*, no *Mahabharata*, no Buddha, and no Jain tradition yet in existence. Forty generations later, 2,000 years ago, the landscape had transformed dramatically: the epics emerged, the Buddha and Mahavira had taught, Yoga had appeared, and the concept of Dharma had crystallised.

Crucially, the Vedas focus exclusively on *Purusha*, the formless, invisible, abstract reality. The Upanishads expanded this with terms like Atma, Brahman, Jeeva, and Prana, all attempting to describe what makes us alive, what generates emotions and consciousness. These are *nir*guna and *nirakara*, qualities that cannot be seen but only felt. The Vedas contain no mention of sattvic food. Even Ayurveda, often conflated with these concepts, classifies the body through *Vata* (wind), *Pitta* (fire), and *Kapha* (water), never through *sattva*, *rajas*, or *tamas*.

Around 2,000 years ago, a profound shift occurred. The Buddhists and Jains, the Shramana traditions, redirected attention to the body, to suffering, to consumption and violence. In response, a new vocabulary emerged centred on *Prakriti*: matter, nature, the body, the measurable world shaped by time and space.

This is where *tantra* enters. Though the word *tantra* appears in the Rig Veda, meaning "weave" or "loom", its philosophical meaning crystallised later. Just as cloth requires both warp and weft, life requires both and *Prakriti*. Spirituality cannot exist without material reality. The Sankhya philosophy enumerated this dual structure, and the Maitreya Upanishad introduced something revolutionary: *Prakriti* possesses three *gunas*, namely *rajas* (agitation, high energy), *tamas* (inertia, stillness), and *sattva* (the balanced median between them). These were states of matter, phases they go through.

Devdutt Pattanaik
works with gods and demons who churn nectar from the ocean of Indian, Chinese, Islamic, Christian, even secular mythologies

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali later refined these ideas: *rajas* as activity, *tamas* as inertia, *sattva* as clarity. Importantly, no hierarchy existed among the three. They were interdependent states of nature itself, like the cycle of waking clear-minded, becoming active through the day, and resting at night. There was still no mention of food, caste, or *varna*.

A dramatic synthesis occurred in the *Bhagavad Gita*, composed roughly 1,700 years ago within the *Mahabharata*. Krishna performs a remarkable conceptual fusion, declaring he has two wombs: *Purusha* and *Prakriti*. He bridges the Vedic and the Tantric, the formless and the material.

Then comes the genuine innovation. The *Gita* extends the *gunas* to *ahara*, food, classifying meals as sattvic, rajasic, or tamasic. It then links the *gunas* to the *chaturvarna* system: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra. *Sattva* was linked to Brahmins (priests-philosophers), *rajas* to Kshatriyas (land-owners) and *tamas* to Shudras (servants). Vaishyas were accommodated as a mix of *rajas* and *tamas*. To be fair, this exact one-to-one correlation between *guna* and *varna* is not found in the *Gita*. These appear in later commentaries on the Vedas.

Genetic studies confirm that caste endogamy entrenched itself in India approximately 70 generations ago, precisely when the *Dharmashastras*, *Manusmriti*, and the *Bhagavad Gita* were being composed, when Brahmins were reasserting authority against Buddhist influence under Gupta patronage. So this idea of food related to caste and purity is a post-Vedic idea propagated by a Brahmin lobby pushing back against Buddhist popularity.

True sattvic living, as understood by the Jains and Ajivikas, meant complete renunciation: no possessions, no lies, no theft, no sex, no harm. It was not *ahimsa* (non-violence) without *aparigraha* (non-possession). The Digambara Jain ascetics wore no clothes and would allow tigers to consume their bodies rather than resist. Modern claims that vegetarianism alone constitutes a sattvic lifestyle while accumulating wealth and property bear little resemblance to this rigorous original meaning. It amplifies the easy path of what to eat and ignores the tough part of walking away from material domination.

The takeaway is simple. The Vedas gave us *Purusha*. *Tantra* and Yoga gave us *Prakriti* and the *gunas*. Only the *Bhagavad Gita* welded these to food and caste, creating the "sattvic" framework popularly invoked today. Believe what you wish, but know the history.

THE DIGITAL ALARMIST

Appeasing Trump will never work

There has been no meaningful response on the part of the international community after Donald Trump kidnapped Nicolas Maduro, stole Venezuela's oil resources, and extracted billions of dollars from countries across the globe through his tariffs. You can bet the leaders of Cuba, Colombia, Spain, and Mexico – countries which have actively resisted Trump – are next on his list of leaders to be 'indicted' by the United States Department of Justice and renditioned. Under Trump, no leader of any country save Israel, China, and Russia is safe from being kidnapped and brought to trial in the US under trumped-up charges. Under Trump, any fishing vessel in the Atlantic or Pacific Ocean is liable to be blown up by US missiles because it is 'suspected' of carrying narcotics.

The diplomatic doublespeak of India, the European Union, and the United Kingdom have done nothing to contain Trump's savage attack on Iran. The military and economic might of the US being what they are, NATO, Latin America, and India are powerless to stop Trump's megalomaniacal plans to rule the world. There is a historic parallel to what is happening now. Britain and France did nothing when Adolf Hitler annexed Austria in 1938 and occupied Czechoslovakia in 1939, but decided to confront him only after he had invaded Poland.

Appeasing Hitler did not work then, and appeasing Trump now will not work either. The Neville Chamberlains of the 1930s are now found in the leadership of the EU and India, who prioritise protecting their countries' economic interests over their sovereignty.

Given its regional hegemonic interests, China cannot be counted on to counter Trump. It is up to the rest of the Global South to prevent him from savaging the world. The US is most susceptible to threats against its political and economic interests worldwide. The preliminary successes of the Arab oil embargo of 1973 and the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement directed at Israel prove this.

Roger Marshall
is a computer scientist, a newly minted Luddite and a cynic

Recently, President Lula of Brazil called for nations in the Global South to unionise in an effort to oppose Trump's tariffs. While it is a step in the right direction, it is problematic since tariffs aren't the only issue. Any country with large deposits of rare earths, such as lithium, can be coerced, economically and militarily, by the US into giving up these mineral resources in exchange for favourable tariff rates and advanced weapons systems. Ukraine is a telling example.

Focusing on Trump alone is missing the point because he is the symptom, not the disease. Trump's cabinet, his supporters in Congress, and the big corporations which fund his continued stay in office are equally culpable. As sovereign nations, the Global South should stop negotiating with a bully; they must confront him and pay him back in his own coin.

Silicon Valley companies control software used by government agencies, media, private companies, and academic institutions globally. These companies have amassed huge fortunes in the Global South while paying little in taxes. Moreover, these companies have accumulated enormous amounts of user data, which now risks exploitation by AI algorithms.

I would advocate for nation-states in the Global South, especially Brazil, India, and South Africa, to nationalise the local offices and data centres of Big Tech and ban the use of their software on national security grounds. Such a move would severely impact the bottom lines of these companies, whose shareholders in the US are mostly banks, investment houses, and pension funds. The typical American does not react to anything that happens overseas unless he or she is economically impacted. The digital economies of the world and their military forces, especially the US, rely on Big Data more than they do on Big Oil, and it is important to underscore this point.

It has suddenly dawned on the EU nations that an overreliance on Silicon Valley can prove detrimental to their national interests; consequently, they have started taking small steps to counteract this pernicious influence. It may be too late.

China has effectively isolated its digital world from the predatory practices of Big Tech; the rest of the Global South should follow suit. The AI-enhanced digital wars of the future are not going to depend on the acquisition of more territory or oil fields, are they?

THAT BLIND RHODES SCHOLAR

As AI enters courts, human judgment must prevail

Rahul Bajaj
is a practising lawyer with expertise in disability rights and IP law, and is co-founder of Mission Accessibility. He wears more hats than he can himself sometimes count

@rahul400

Artificial intelligence has arrived in the legal profession. The real question, therefore, is not whether AI will be used by the legal profession. It already is. The real question is how best to harness it without compromising the values that underpin the administration of justice.

Recent events illustrate why this debate cannot be postponed. In March, the Supreme Court stayed a judgment by a district judge in Vijayawada. The reason? The judge based her decision on four judgments, which were later found to be actually non-existent and the result of an AI bot's hallucination. The Supreme Court characterised the unverified use of AI in this matter as a serious institutional issue. In the same vein, in December 2024, the Bengaluru bench of the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal, when confronted with a case as to whether interest in a partnership qualifies as property for the purposes of tax law, relied on three Supreme Court and one Madras High Court judgments, through the use of AI, all of which were subsequently found either to be non-existent or wrongly quoted.

Against this backdrop, the Supreme Court's draft Regulations for Use of Artificial Intelligence in Courts 2026 deserve a warm welcome. Several aspects of the draft stand out. First, the regulations unequivocally affirm human primacy. They draw a clear line between adjudicatory and administrative functions. Adjudicatory functions are those that require legal training, from delivering judgments and orders to recording evidence, framing the contested issues in a dispute, and the like. Administrative functions, on the other hand, relate to preparing the list of matters on a given date, ensuring that new filings comply with the court's prescribed formats, and summoning parties or issuing them notices.

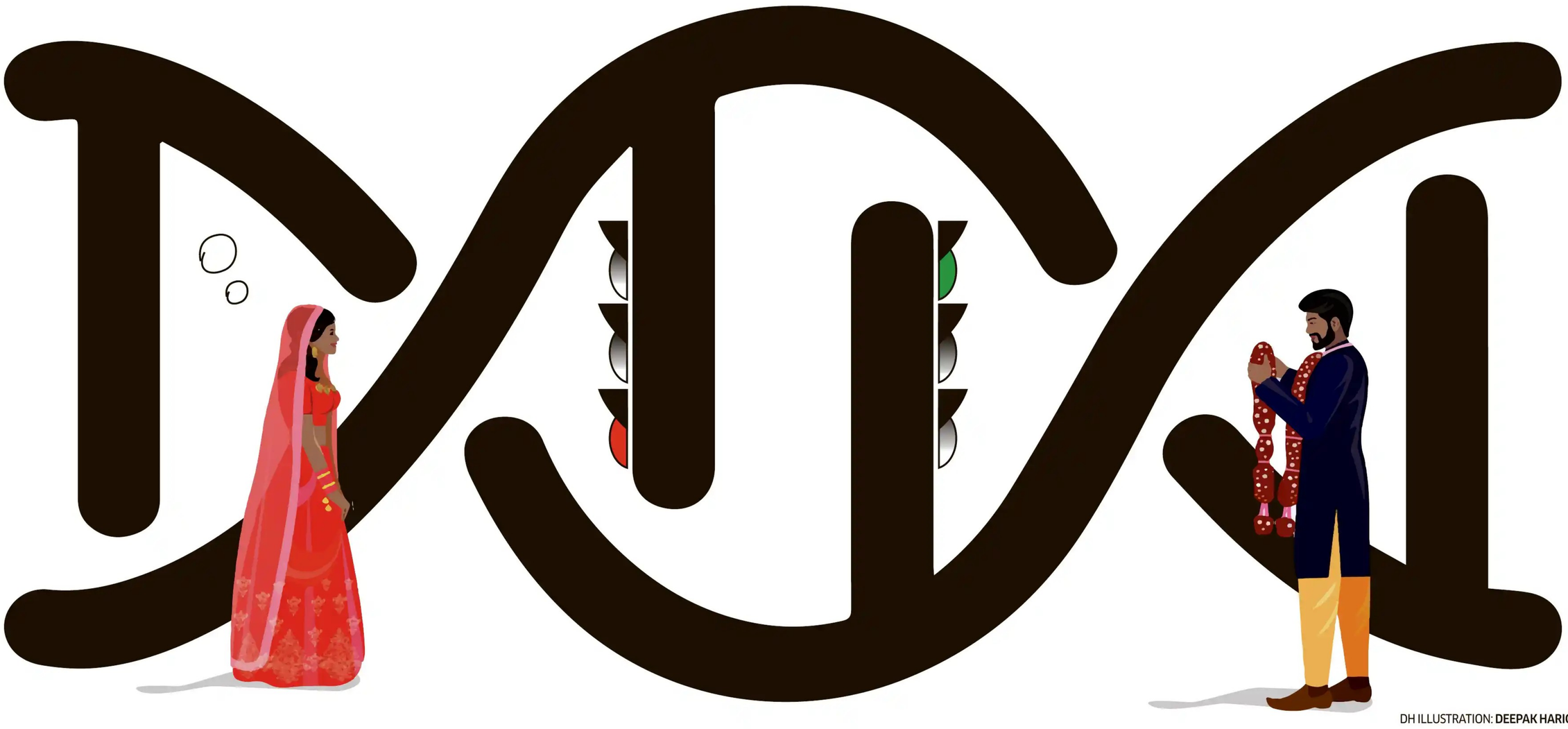
The Regulations promote the use of AI in the latter category and either prohibit its use in the former category altogether or make it subject to strict human supervision. Second, the Regulations create a multi-tier institutional architecture. At the top is the Apex Body, to be set up by the Supreme Court, responsible for overseeing policy formulation and standard-setting in the use of AI in the judiciary. This body will have several committees, dealing with issues such as cybersecurity and technical matters.

There is also to be a Centre for Research and Excellence on AI, to provide expert inputs. The Supreme Court and every high court is to have its own AI Committee, supported by an AI Secretariat, to regulate the use of AI within that given court. Third, the regulations lay down a set of principles for the use of AI, most important amongst which are accountability, non-discrimination, proportionality, transparency, and regular auditing. Finally, and perhaps most importantly from the perspective of inclusion, the Regulations expressly recognise accessibility tools such as text-to-speech, speech-to-text, Braille translation, and visual assistance services, opening new possibilities for persons with disabilities and others who have traditionally struggled to navigate the justice system.

The philosophy underlying the draft is particularly noteworthy. It creates a presumption in favour of responsible adoption rather than one of suspicion. Regulation 16 categorically states that courts are to proactively look for opportunities to use AI in legal processes, with a view to enhancing access to justice. Any decision not to use AI for a particular purpose must be for reasons to be recorded in writing. Building on this sentiment, Regulation 17 prefers innovation over restraint, provided it remains mindful of all the other principles identified as being important in the regulations and is undertaken responsibly.

Yet the conversation should not stop with the courts. If AI can assist judges and registries, it can also democratise legal services. India's legal aid institutions, particularly the National Legal Services Authority and state legal services authorities, should seize this opportunity. Why not promote the use of AI solutions where a litigant can input their problems and upload supporting documents and receive a draft of a petition for court filing, subject, of course, to due vetting by a qualified lawyer?

The Supreme Court must be appreciated for tackling the bull by its horns, by coming out with a set of principled and forward-looking regulations, rather than letting the problem overtake it. Equally, experience teaches us that creating too many committees is never a good idea. Especially if they require judges to devote considerable time and effort while managing a crushing workload. Therefore, courts would do well to draw on the expertise of domain experts to unlock the full potential of AI for strengthening our justice delivery mechanisms in a balanced and measured manner.



DH ILLUSTRATION: DEEPAK HARICHANDAN

Genes before vows

In the concluding part of our series on the changing nature of weddings, we explore why premarital genetic screening is gaining popularity among urban couples. Conversations once confined to family history and horoscopes are now expanding to include inherited disease and reproductive risks, prompting couples to ask difficult questions before marriage and parenthood, discovers Amullya Shivashankar

When Vijay* and Anjali* decided to get married, an article about genetic counselling and inherited diseases changed their wedding plans. Instead of focusing on horoscopes and venues, they booked appointments with a genetic counsellor. Though they were not related to each other, they discovered they were silent carriers of genetic mutations, meaning there was a 25 per cent chance that a child they intended to have could inherit a genetic disorder.

Stories like theirs are becoming increasingly common in urban India, where premarital genetic counselling is slowly but steadily entering mainstream conversations around marriage and parenthood. In Bengaluru's fertility clinics, hospitals and diagnostic centres, doctors say more young couples are voluntarily opting for carrier screening before marriage, or at least before pregnancy, to assess the likelihood of passing on inherited diseases.

Personal dilemmas

For some, the decision to undergo genetic testing stems from family history. For others, it is driven by delayed parenthood, rising awareness of preventive healthcare, or anxiety about the unknown. But alongside the science lie deeply personal dilemmas, especially in a society where arranged marriages remain common. How much should partners disclose? Can test results influence marriage or parenthood decisions? Should genetic compatibility become the next form of matchmaking?

As genetic counselling moves towards mainstream healthcare, it is raising uncomfortable social questions. In counselling rooms across the city, doctors say conversations that begin with science often end in emotion, bringing fear, guilt, stigma, anxiety and uncertainty about relationships. Other couples, however, view it as a responsible step towards informed parenthood and an opportunity to make better decisions.

A positive carrier result does not mean a person is ill, nor does it guarantee that a child will inherit a disease. Yet experts say many couples struggle to understand probabilities, inheritance patterns and the emotional implications of screening outcomes.

What do doctors say about premarital screening?

Explaining what premarital screening medically entails, Dr Anitha BR, Senior Consultant, Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Scientific Director-IVF, said, "It is a set of medical tests carried out by couples before a wedding to identify any genetic or physiological problems that may exist in them, as well as the potential risks to children they may conceive in the future. Premarital genetic testing is carried out to identify certain genetic disorders such as hemoglobinopathies, including thalassemia and sickle cell anaemia, as well as conditions such as cystic fibrosis and spinal muscular atrophy."

Dr Anitha suggested that, regardless of whether a couple has a known family history of genetic disorders, genetic testing can be useful because many people are silent carriers of inherited conditions. She added that premarital screening may also include testing for infections such as Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Human Papillomavirus (HPV).

Unique risk for Indians

Dr Mallikarjun R Patil, Consultant, Medical Genetics and Personalised Medicine, pointed to one of the risk factors in the Indian population.

"There is a degree of consanguinity here. Marriages within blood relations, for example, between cousins, first cousins, second cousins or even maternal uncles, are quite common, especially in South India. Due to this, there can be a higher chance of rare autosomal recessive genetic disorders occurring within family lines, so the overall risk goes up."

Everyone carries altered or faulty genes, usually without knowing it. Most of the time, this does not matter because they also carry a normal copy of the same gene. However, when relatives marry and both carry the same faulty gene, their child may inherit two faulty copies, increasing the chances of a genetic disorder.

History of premarital testing

While premarital genetic testing is gaining popularity among urban Indians in 2026, it has a long history of reducing the number of affected births in several populations.

Cyprus: One of the best-known success stories in thalassemia prevention comes from Cyprus. The government, public health institutions and religious bodies made premarital screening and counselling mandatory in the 1970s, dramatically reducing the births of children with severe thalassemia.

Iran: A nationwide premarital thalassemia screening programme launched in the 1990s substantially reduced the number of affected births through carrier identification, counselling and prenatal diagnosis.

Ashkenazi Jewish communities: Community-based carrier screening programmes significantly reduced the incidence of Tay-Sachs disease over several decades through early carrier detection and counselling.

Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries, as well as Italy and Greece, have also introduced compulsory premarital screening programmes to reduce cases of sickle cell disease and thalassemia.

Emotional coping

When doctors return with positive results, which can be emotionally devastating, Dr Priya Kadam, Director, Reproductive Genomics, at a well-known genome laboratory, explained what happens inside a counselling room.

"Even though carrier status does not affect a person's own health, learning about it can trigger feelings of guilt, shame, fear and anxiety about future children or the impact on the extended family. However, when couples understand how the situation can be managed, they tend to cope with the results much better.

"The couple need to know that one or both partners may be carriers, there may be unexpected findings, or they may discover carrier status for a common disorder. Once expectations are set, there is generally better acceptance of the results because different outcomes can be managed with an appropriate plan. They need to understand the different types of tests available and receive psychological support throughout the process."

Understanding the process and what the results mean helps couples align decisions with their cultural, social and personal beliefs, and make informed choices about testing, further investigations and how they may approach caring for a child born with a disorder, she added.

Highlighting a gap in the genetic counselling ecosystem, Dr Priya Kadam said, "India has a large population, but the number of trained genetic counsellors is still limited, so there is a long way to go in this area. Adequate genetic counselling may involve a 45-60 minute session per couple to address their specific concerns and questions.

"In some places, counselling is quite adequate, while in others, more comprehensive counselling is needed to help couples fully understand and make the best use of these tests."

Way ahead

While navigating the anxiety of a positive result, couples must also find answers to difficult questions about their future. If they decide to continue and have a child, can they do so without passing on a genetic disorder? Dr Priya Ranganath, a reproductive geneticist, explained: "If the couple are consanguineous, there is a very high probability of them having a child with a serious genetic disorder because they may carry a common gene between them. An expanded carrier screening is conducted, and we identify which genes they are both carriers for. "Once we identify the gene of interest, there are two or three options. The first is natural conception. Around 12 weeks into the pregnancy, we can take a sample of the baby's DNA and check whether both faulty copies of the gene have been inherited. If the faulty copies from the father and the mother come together, they can cause disease. If there is only one faulty copy, as in the parents, or no faulty copy at all, then the baby is not affected.

"There is always a 25% chance that the baby will be affected and a 75% chance that the baby will be unaffected. If the baby falls within that 25% risk category, then there is a risk of a serious genetic disorder, and we can offer the option of termination of pregnancy. This process is called prenatal diagnosis."

Another option is In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF), in which embryos can be tested before implantation to determine whether they carry the faulty gene. This process is known as Preimplantation Genetic Testing for Monogenic Disorders (PGT-M), allowing only unaffected embryos to be transferred, she added.

Test results versus marriage

Speaking about the implications of testing on marriage itself, Dr Priya Kadam said:

"Marriage is a very personal decision and also depends on the individuals, their families and their choices. Screening should help inform couples and support decision-making, but it should not dictate whether they marry. Awareness is extremely important. Two carriers of the same severe condition can absolutely marry and build a healthy family with proper reproductive planning."

"Counselling is very important and should always be non-directive. Couples should be given the facts, they should understand the risks involved and have a plan in place so that when they decide to start a family, they can undergo appropriate testing to help avoid the disorder," she added.

A couple who tested positive

In the course of reporting, I found Rohan* and Ananya*, a couple who underwent genetic testing before marriage. The couple had been in a relationship for six years before deciding to marry.

Before the wedding, they underwent genetic testing and discovered that Rohan was a silent carrier of the thalassemia trait. While he was asymptomatic, he could still pass the condition on to any children they intended to have. Ananya said, "The results were quite shocking. We went ahead and got married because we had been in love for so long. It is not something you let go of." But they made a difficult decision: not to have children.

"While I have wanted children all my life, I do not want a small child to suffer because of something we, as parents, passed on. That feeling would be heartbreaking. So we decided against having children, and we are content with the decision we made," she said.

Some names have been changed to protect identity.

Genetic testing: A primer

Simply put, genetic testing is a medical test that examines a person's DNA, the genetic material inherited from their parents. It is meant to identify changes or mutations in genes that may increase the risk of certain inherited disorders or be passed on to future children. The test is usually done using a blood sample, saliva sample or a swab taken from inside the cheek. The sample is analysed in a laboratory to look for specific genetic variations.

One of the most common forms is carrier screening, which checks whether a healthy person carries a gene mutation linked to a genetic disorder. Carriers often have no symptoms themselves but can pass the mutation on to their children. If both partners carry mutations in the same gene, there is a higher risk of having a child with that condition.

Genetic testing can screen for disorders such as thalassemia, sickle cell disease, cystic fibrosis, spinal muscular atrophy, Tay-Sachs disease and others.

A positive result does not necessarily mean a person is ill or that a child will definitely inherit a disorder. Instead, the results help couples make informed decisions.

MIXED BAG

'Mixed Bag' is your Sunday potpourri — an assortment of snappy articles, engaging ideas and snackable nibbles about this and that, from here and there. Dip in!

Troy, a source of Turkish pride

A gift from the film set of 'Troy', a giant Trojan Horse replica, looms over the port of Canakkale on the Dardanelles Strait in western Turkey. First related by Homer, then retold for the silver screen in 2004, with Brad Pitt as Achilles, the legend of the ancient city travels to Rome's Colosseum this week, where a major new exhibition opened recently.

Keen to showcase the city's Anatolian roots, Turkey has loaned out more than 220 artefacts that will be on show at the exhibition, "Troy and Rome", which runs until mid-October.

"When you read Homer, you don't get a very clear idea of the Trojans' identity. But at the time of the Trojan War, they were certainly among the Anatolian peoples," said Reyhan Korpe, deputy head of the Troy excavations and an ancient history expert at Canakkale University.

A tourist takes a selfie in front of the Trojan Horse at the Canakkale Square in western Turkey. AFP PIC

Located on Turkey's Aegean coastline, the remains of Troy are a UNESCO-listed World Heritage site comprising 185 hectares (457 acres) of stones and crumbling ramparts dotted with poppies and scampering squirrels. For 30 years, Korpe has walked every inch of this huge site, whose layers tell the story of nine different settlements, the remains of their ramparts intertwined and layered on top of one another.

"I spent a whole year just walking through the stones, maps in hand, trying to understand how they fit together," he told *AFP*. His passion is evident for the site, which was founded in 3,000 BC and was constantly inhabited until being abandoned in the sixth century AD.

"It was the most western part of eastern civilisation," which is what gave Troy its significance, Korpe said. The Trojan War, which took place around 1,200 BC and lasted 10 years, until the siege and the city's defeat — parts of which are recounted in the Iliad — "was the first confrontation between the East and the West", he said of the Anatolian world and its Greek equivalent, referring to it as "the first world war".

It is an idea with strong resonance in these wooded hills, which several millennia later witnessed the World War I battles of 1915, when Allied troops suffered a bloody defeat trying to seize the Dardanelles from the Ottoman Empire.

Of the hundreds of artefacts Turkey has loaned to the Rome exhibition, more than 100 come from the Troy museum, some of which will be on display for the first time.

One piece is a bronze seal marked with hieroglyphics that was discovered in 1995, which offers important clues about the city's Anatolian roots. "It's the only trace of writing found at Troy that was written in an Anatolian language, which proves that the first language spoken there was that of the Luwian peoples," explained museum director Sinem Duzgoren. The Luwians were an ancient people who lived in western and southern Anatolia during the Bronze and early Iron Ages, whose language played a major role in the Hittite empire.

Although Troy was not a Hittite city, it was part of the Hittite empire, which referred to it as Wilusa. That became Ilion for the Greeks — or Ilios for Homer. "These pieces may not be the most spectacular, but they are the most important from a historical point of view, because they bear witness to the history of Troy," Duzgoren told *AFP*.

Also sent to Rome are a large number of weapons for use in war — stones for use in a sling, knives, spears and arrowheads. "These weapons are mentioned in the Iliad and date from the same period that they were mentioned by Homer," she said. But it is a reality that is a far cry from the epic, romanticised fighting that plays out in Wolfgang Petersen's 'Troy' (2004).

Apart from bequeathing the 12-tonne replica of the Trojan Horse looming over Canakkale's waterfront, the film did a lot to fuel renewed interest in Troy, Korpe said.

AFP

FEEDBACK
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ASTROSPEAK

Guruji Shrii Arnav

Scan the QR code to read the ***weekly horoscope***

PRIDE MONTH EDITION

The first Taiwanese novel to win the International Booker, Taiwan Travelogue transforms an ordinary journey into a richly textured exploration of identity and history, writes Asra Mavad

The island beyond the headlines

Some places call out to us long before we ever set foot in them. Taiwan is one such place for me. I have never visited the island, yet it occupies a distinct place in my imagination.

Among the countries of East Asia, Taiwan stands apart. It feels more intimate than its larger neighbours, less consumed by the grand narratives that often dominate conversations about the region. It is a place I find myself wanting to understand, and Yang Shuang-zi's Taiwan Travelogue offers an invitation to do exactly that.

TAIWAN TRAVELOGUE
Yang Shuang-zi
Picador, pp 318, Rs 499

At first glance, the book appears to belong to the well-worn tradition of travel writing. Yet Taiwan Travelogue is anything but a conventional travelogue. Yang uses the framework of a journey to explore questions of history, identity, language and memory. The result is a work that reads as much like a novel as it does a record of travel, carrying readers through landscapes that are both physical and emotional.

The narrative follows the travels of two women through Taiwan during the Japanese colonial period. Their journey unfolds through conversations, shared meals, train rides and observations of the world around them. Yet beneath these seemingly ordinary experiences lies a deeper exploration of a society negotiating multiple identities. Taiwan emerges not as a static backdrop but as a living, breathing character, shaped by layers of history and competing influences.

What makes the book particularly compelling is its attention to detail. Yang has an extraordinary ability to bring places to life through sensory description. Streets, railway stations, tea houses and markets emerge vividly on the page. The reader is not merely told about Taiwan but invited to experience it. There is a warmth and intimacy to these descriptions that makes the island feel accessible even to those who have never been there.

Food occupies a central place in the narrative. Meals are never simply meals. They become opportunities to understand culture, class, history and relationships. Through descriptions of local dishes and dining customs, Yang reveals how food carries memory and identity across generations. Some of the book's most memorable moments unfold around dining tables, where personal stories intersect with larger historical realities.

The novel also provides a much-needed reminder that food remains a central part of our daily lives, extending far beyond mere sustenance and standing in sharp contrast to the culture of convenience and quick-commerce deliveries that many Indians have become accustomed to. Food is deeply political, reflecting issues of power, inequality, access, agriculture, trade and environmental sustainability. Every meal carries stories of heritage, migration, celebration and struggle. The aromas, flavours and recipes we encounter often preserve memories more vividly than photographs, connecting us to people, places and moments that continue to shape our lives.

The historical setting adds another layer of richness to the narrative. Set during Japanese colonial rule, the novel examines a period that continues to influence Taiwanese society. Yet Yang avoids reducing history to a series of facts or political arguments. Instead, history is woven seamlessly into everyday life. It appears in language choices, social interactions, architecture and cultural practices. The narrative becomes all the more relatable because the complexities of colonialism are not explained through lectures but revealed through lived experience. This subtle approach is one of the book's greatest strengths. Rather than offering easy answers, Yang embraces ambiguity. Questions of identity remain fluid and unresolved. Characters navigate multiple cultural influences, speak different languages and inhabit overlapping worlds. In doing so, the novel captures the complexity that often defines Taiwanese identity.

The relationship between the two central characters forms the emotional core of the narrative. Their interactions provide moments of humour, tenderness and insight. As they travel together, they reveal not only the landscapes around them but also their own vulnerabilities and aspirations. The companionship at the heart of the story lends the book much of its emotional resonance.

Overall, the book suggests that understanding a place requires patience and curiosity rather than a checklist of landmarks. As someone who has long been drawn to Taiwan, I find this approach especially appealing. Taiwan has always stood out to me among the countries of the region. While destinations such as Japan, South Korea and China often dominate travel conversations, Taiwan feels quieter and more intimate. It seems to invite exploration rather than spectacle.

Reading the Taiwan Travelogue reinforces that impression. The Taiwan that emerges from these pages is not defined by tourist attractions or geopolitical headlines but by people, stories and everyday experiences.

The book's recent international recognition only underscores its significance. In 2026, Taiwan Travelogue became the first novel translated from Taiwanese Mandarin to win the International Booker Prize, with Yang Shuang-zi and translator Lin King making history as the first Taiwanese author-translator team to receive the honour. The judges praised the novel for its "inventive structure, emotional depth and nuanced exploration of history, power and love."

The author has an extraordinary ability to bring places to life through sensory description. Seen here is a view of the Memorial Park in Taipei.

A heartwarming look at gay intimacy

In a narrative driven by emotional drama, Rahul Singh explores a gay couple's bond and society's view of other people's relationships, writes Chintan Girish Modi

Do you remember Kantaben, the housekeeper played by Sulbha Arya in Nikkhil Advani's film Kal Ho Naa Ho (2003), who is shocked out of her wits when she sees Aman Mathur (Shah Rukh Khan) and Rohit Patel (Saif Ali Khan) sharing a bed, with their bodies a little too close for her comfort? She is the face of moral panic. Her eye-roll and trembling hands might seem over-the-top in 2026, but these responses capture how deeply unsettling it can be for heteronormative conditioning to encounter a way of life that it has no frame of reference for.

If Kantaben was more than a caricature meant to evoke laughter, how would she relate to the men whose intimacy is hard for her to make sense of? This question arose in my mind while reading Rahul Singh's novel Unfolding, which has a domestic worker named Zubina walking in on "a moment of tenderness" between her employer, Ralph and his partner Ojas. The book is set in Kolkata in 2019, and the narrative is driven by emotional drama rather than plot twists.

Unlike screenwriter Karan Johar, who deploys Kantaben's bewilderment and class background for comic relief, Singh seems interested in Zubina's interiority as a human being. Since Zubina had never seen her husband, Aadil, "sleep with his childhood friend the way she had seen Ralph sleep with Ojas", she struggles to name what is unfamiliar. She is inclined to believe that "maybe Ralph and Ojas were merely close friends" because that is easier to wrap her head around.

UNFOLDING
Rahul Singh
HarperCollins, pp 280, Rs 399

Zubina's character arc is fleshed out with care and complexity. Despite the lingering sense of incomprehension, a part of her wishes that she and Aadil had what Ralph and Ojas have. Her memory of the intimacy she had witnessed at her employer's home makes her body long for Aadil's touch. He is too exhausted with work to fathom her feelings.

By delaying Zubina's conversation with Ralph and Ojas about their relationship, the author is able to sustain the woman's curiosity. When the gay couple goes through ups and downs, she feels personally invested and roots for their happiness. Eventually, she takes them by surprise when she suggests, half-jokingly, that they should get married. It is a heartwarming moment because here is a person who wants a secure and sustainable future for these men. According to her, the only framework within which this is possible is marriage, so she wishes it upon them.

What makes this book stand out is the fact that it grants legitimacy and depth to a domestic worker's viewpoint. Zubina's openness is striking because she does not know anyone else who is queer, and has no exposure to the language of activism or queer representation in literature and cinema. Yet she is an ally. The author chooses not to depict Zubina as homophobic. The stereotype that all practising Muslims are homophobic is pernicious and worth challenging.

Ralph is a Christian, and Ojas is a Hindu. Their connection with faith is not examined in any significant manner, but the novel has a beautiful scene with Ralph and Ojas sitting together at a church in Darjeeling when they go on a holiday that sows seeds of distrust in their relationship.

Singh's skill as a writer lies in exploring how people project their own fantasies onto other people's relationships. Zubina has no inkling of the conflicts between Ojas and Ralph. She imagines that they are absolutely committed to each other while they fight over the pros and cons of being in an open relationship. Ralph wants Ojas to have sex with no one other than him. Ojas feels smothered by this expectation. He thinks that the two of them can have sex with other men while they retain and protect their emotional loyalty to each other.

Read the novel to find out how it unfolds. The bond between Ralph and Ojas may not be the strongest aspect of the book. Its more haunting aspects are the ones where Ralph goes to his mother's grave to unburden himself, and where Ojas's father tells him, "I see you and think: Why does he want to choose loneliness?" It appears that Ralph and Ojas have created a world where they call the shots, but the truth is that their parents continue to live inside their heads.

MOODBOARD

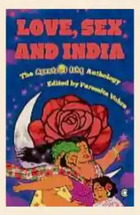
Queer stories have always existed, even when history tried to erase them. Here are three books that offer a joyful and thought-provoking journey through LGBTQIA+ experiences:

Evenings and Weekends by Oisín McKenna (Fourth Estate)

Summer in London stops for no one. It's June 2019, and everyone has converged on the city's parks, beer gardens and street corners to revel in the collective joys of being alive. Everyone but Maggie. She's 30, pregnant and broke. Ed, meanwhile, is trying to run from his past with Maggie's best friend Phil. Phil hates his office job and is living for the weekend, while falling for his housemate, Keith, who has a boyfriend. As Saturday approaches, all their lives are set to change.

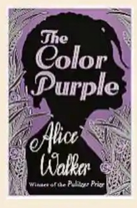
Love, Sex, and India by Paromita Vohra (Context)

Born in 2015 out of a dream of creating a homegrown, sex-positive conversation, Agents of Ishq exploded into an unexpected phenomenon. This brings together some of these evocative stories that evade all binaries: cheeky reports of first dates, situationships, hook-ups; tales of longing, of heartbreak, of tender friendships; grim accounts of sexual exploitation and assault, and so much more.



The Color Purple by Alice Walker (W&N)

This is the classic tale of Celie, a young black girl born into poverty and segregation. Raped repeatedly by the man she calls 'father', she has two children taken away from her, is separated from her beloved sister Nettie and is trapped in an ugly marriage. But then she meets the glamorous Shug Avery, singer and magic-maker, a woman who has taken charge of her own destiny.



Mood Board *is a column that presents thematic lists of books on hot-button topics.*

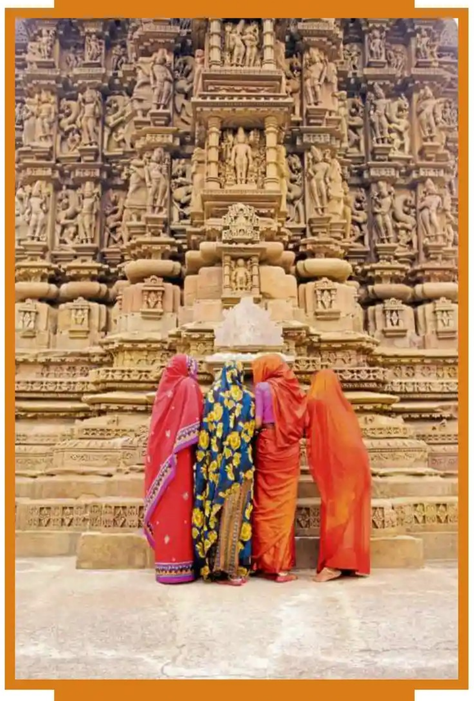
Unearthing forgotten queer pasts

This is an erudite, fascinating book that digs up a past where gender was often more fluid than we imagine, whether it was Ardhanarishwara or Khajuraho, writes Sudhirendar Sharma

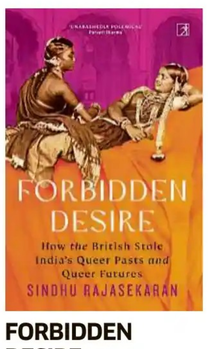
Our society may forbid transgressive desires, but it has preserved their expressions in murals, paintings and artefacts since time immemorial. While Shiva's Ardhanarishwara captures the synthesis of masculinity and femininity, the stone carvings of the Khajuraho temples reflect a proto-feminist past that is quintessentially queer.

The fascinating thing about queerness is that it permeates time. It may be suppressed by societal norms or expressed through myriad forms of human desire, but an element of femininity or masculinity exists in each of us. It emerges and finds expression when circumstances permit. Queerness manifests as a gender identity that extends beyond societal norms. It is as natural as breathing because human bodies and minds do not fit neatly into prescribed templates of gender identity.

The rapid social, economic and political changes reshaping the world have rendered many traditional gender binaries increasingly dysfunctional and obsolete. Even in ancient, medieval and early modern times, polyamory, polygamy and polyandry were widely recognised. Draupadi may appear to be mythology's only polyandrous woman, yet polyandry was a lived reality in several communities across the subcontinent. The practice of having multiple husbands persisted in remote mountain regions as late as the nineteenth century. Anthropologists have proposed socio-economic explanations for such arrangements, but human desire remained the force that sustained them.



The stone carvings of the Khajuraho temples reflect a proto-feminist past that is quintessentially queer, argues the author.



FORBIDDEN DESIRE
Sindhu Rajasekaran
S&S, pp 272, Rs 799

Ancient mythology is replete with examples of gender fluidity. Even the gods are included, for divinities transcend gender. Shiva is often depicted as hyper-masculine, while Vishnu is frequently associated with feminine qualities. These may be the most prominent examples, but social practices relating to diverse gender identities formed a subculture that endured for centuries. Indian society was largely accommodating of such expressions, but to prudish Victorian eyes they appeared scandalous. Consequently, colonial rulers systematically erased many South Asian queer subcultures. A host of laws criminalised them, while society was conditioned to view the past as necessarily regressive.

Sindhu Rajasekaran, who holds a doctorate from the University of Strathclyde, identifies herself as ambiguous and acknowledges that the decriminalisation of Section 377 spared her the burden of having to justify who she is: sapphic, fluid, ambiguous and bisexual. Her exploration of gender identity led her to conclude that gender fluidity is not a foreign fad. Because it does not fit within Victorian notions of rigid gender binaries, she argues, it must be understood through a process of decolonisation. In Forbidden Desire, she places contemporary categories of gender identity within a broader cultural and historical perspective. She further contends that queerness has the potential to dismantle patriarchal structures, which may explain why emerging LGBTQ+ identities continue to face resistance and struggle for wider social acceptance.

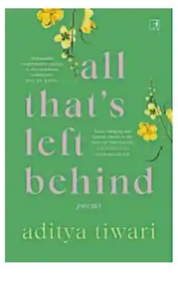
Sindhu argues that patriarchy is threatened by gender fluidity because it has the power to unsettle entrenched hierarchies. Patriarchal systems, she suggests, are rooted in masculine modes of thinking that simultaneously fetishise the feminine. As androgynous expressions gain wider recognition, she finds reason to believe that the future is turning femme. Long-suppressed desires are beginning to surface. In this context, she proposes "mxn" as a gender expression that is neither man nor woman. Viewed through this lens, individuals are free to express themselves in ways that reflect their authentic selves.

Queerness is not out of the ordinary. It neither conforms to prespecified categories nor remains confined within established customs and practices. Instead, it represents a period of destabilisation in traditional gender roles and relationships. Forbidden Desire offers a fresh way of approaching enduring questions about existence and the societies we have created, both in the past and in the present.

READ OF THE WEEK

All That's Left Behind is a collection of poems that traverses memory, displacement, queerness, love, and resistance. These poems inhabit the space between elegy and erasure, where rivers remember, cities burn, and the body becomes both archive and aftermath. A mother's trench coat from 1983, a mango tree rooted in childhood, and a father's black Bajaj scooter become charged emblems in a poetics of radical compression and startling imagery. Here, language is both refuge and rupture, where memory is rendered volatile yet enduring. At once intimate and political, the collection meditates on what remains after love, departure, and naming, transforming silence into form and making erasure speak, cementing Aditya Tiwari as a distinctive contemporary voice in Indian poetry.

Aditya Tiwari is a poet and broadcaster. His debut poetry collection, April is Lush (2019), brought him early acclaim, followed by the widely praised anthology Over the Rainbow: India's Queer Heroes (2023). He is a former BBC producer and host of the BBC's Voices series on men's mental health. His work and interviews have appeared in The Washington Post, The Telegraph, GQ, Elle, VICE, Refinery29, and elsewhere. A TEDx speaker and Cosmopolitan's Ones to Watch, he received the India-UK Achievers Honours at the UK Parliament.



Allies are not meant to look for the camera or hog the spotlight; they are meant to hold up the light and offer support, writes Arundhati Ghosh

Allyship is all about moving from intention to action.

June, our month of Pride arrives with the rainbow-splendour of reclaiming desires, streets and the right to live and love differently. Commemorating the Stonewall Riots, a series of protests in New York in June 1969 against police atrocities on queer people at the Stonewall Inn, this month is a celebration of the struggles as well as triumphs of LGBTQIA+ communities across the world. It is a time to honour the martyrs of the movement, remember those still incarcerated and criminalised in many countries for their identities and love lives, and build solidarities against persecutions of birth, state and capital. It is also a good time to relook at what it means to be an ally, and care for movements that have our support and loyalty.

We all fight battles, united in common interest. We take the frontline when personally and directly impacted by injustice, and stand in solidarity as allies to defend and amplify the rights and dignity of others. One may become an ally because a loved one is affected, or to leverage our privileges in the advocacy of transformations we seek, or for the belief that a more just and equitable world is immensely possible and better for everyone. I have been a foot soldier in a few movements, but the learnings that I have received being an ally will live with me for a lifetime.

Here are life lessons for an ally, as a tribute to the Pride month.

Supporting cast, not protagonists

Allies must understand that they are not centre stage — the movement and communities affected directly are. So, allies must stop seizing mikes and looking for the camera, and instead hold up lights to focus on those at the frontlines. Every theatre artist knows what the supporting cast does — provides crucial atmospheric context to a narrative, helps tell the overarching story, and if a protagonist falters — preserves continuity with minor interventions without stealing their thunder. Those at the frontlines don't need saving from allies; they are well on their way to doing it themselves. They need ladders, loudspeakers, and enough steaming idli sambar. The role of the ally is to be a friend and share as requested — comment, critique or offer resources as much as possible. Since suggestions may or may not be taken, egoism is not a desirable quality in an ally. More than anything else, the ally's role is to hold space, and sometimes be Plan B.

TIES AND KNOTS

Need to do the labour

For the longest time, affected communities have educated allies of the struggles and challenges they encounter. In addition to living with and battling discrimination every day, this burden too is upon them. Allies can make a difference by doing the labour of gathering knowledge themselves. Today, there are enough books, articles, interviews and case studies with diverse perspectives available online and elsewhere to enlighten oneself on any issue. Allies could also reach out to community members directly for conversations but in which case I suggest a remuneration be paid for their time to educate. An ally must also move from intention to action online and on ground as much as they can. But they have additional responsibilities too. Often I hear friends say they don't understand 'queer', or don't know the difficulties disabled people face negotiating the city, or what 'Dalit lives matter' means. Right there, allies have their work cut out for them — to share knowledge and experience of working with affected communities to alleviate the ignorance of larger worlds.

FEEDBACK
Have something to say? Send your feedback and suggestions to arufeedback @gmail.com

Learn to apologise

Allies cannot be so righteous as to believe that they are beyond questions and doubts. Or leave the field in a sulk if called out for mistakes or errors of judgement, especially by the members of communities they have committed to rally for. Allies are not doing anyone a favour and movements don't owe them immunity from accountability. It is astute to accept that those at the frontlines are the domain experts and better cognizant of the complexities of the movement. It is appropriate to acknowledge the shortcoming and apologise for it. But one must apologise properly. An apology is submission of power that allies often forget they carry. So much of power is also a habit, difficult to shake off. An apology is neither a place for explanation nor justification of a mistake; it's also not a place where one expresses hurt for being interrogated. There are other ways of communicating that through different conversations, but the apology is not the vessel or it. Instead, if done with care, the moment of the apology can become both a learning experience for allies as well as an opportunity of bonding with the community.

Must seek community counsel

Allies who are in positions of power must remember that most of our battles are against structural systems of power that routinely disenfranchise people. The privileges and influence they wield often emerges from representing that same power. They are sitting in, to borrow from Audre Lorde, the master's house. If they are true allies their job would be to steadily take apart the inequities from the inside, even as they use their power for movements they pledge their allegiance to. But as Audre Lorde warned us, the master's tools will not dismantle the master's house. When these allies face conflicts that raise questions about the role of power, they must avoid listening to advisors invested in the system for their own benefit. Instead, allies must reach as far and away as possible from centres of power, to communities, seeking their counsel which is more wise than strategic. I understand allies in positions of power walk a tight rope. But they don't need to tie themselves up in knots with it.

I have realised that these life lessons go a long way — much beyond making a good ally. They enhance dependable friendships, trusted collegiality, and committed partnerships. I now understand when Ma needs the spotlight cooking her famous kosha mangsho, sans my shadow worrying that it requires more elbow grease than she can muster. The lessons make me a better daughter too. I feel anyone can be an ally for any movement as long as there are shared values and a common homeland, even if we don't always agree on the roadmap to get there. And as Adrienne Rich wisely said, "There must be those among whom we can sit down and weep, and still be counted as warriors."

(This column navigates the various worlds of entangled relationships attempting to celebrate, cope with, and reimagine the meanings of our connections. Arundhati Ghosh is a writer, cultural practitioner, social activist, and traveller. All Our Loves: Journeys with Polyamory in India is her first book in English published by Aleph Book Company in 2025.)

Travel

The Maldives is where turquoise waters, spotless skies, and white powdery sands meet. Karunakaran K takes a trip to the country and its colourful capital, Malé, and comes back with a longing to revisit the island nation

Many shades of BLUE

As our plane hovered over innumerable atolls dotting the expansive seascape, long stretches of powdery white beaches skirted by turquoise waters, we knew that we had arrived at our much awaited holiday destination — the Maldives.

During our descent, we could spot small boats and yachts speeding across the blue waters leaving long frothy trails behind. These boats ferry passengers to and from the airport on Hulhule Island and Malé (now connected by a bridge), as well as from Velana International Airport direct to some island resorts.

We boarded a boat to reach the landing at Boduthakurufaanu Magu, a main road in Malé named after Sultan Mohammed Thakurufaanu, the national hero. Malé is the boat transport hub for the country. The first evening was spent strolling down Boduthakurufaanu Magu, the road that goes all around Malé like a ring. Malé is densely populated; the streets are narrow, lined on both sides with banks, shops, offices, eateries and colourful houses.

Historic landmarks

At the end of the main road, we saw the President's office, and the lush green park, Jumuri Maidan or Republic Square in front, a popular lung space. We headed to the Islamic Centre, Malé's famous architectural landmark. The centre's Grand Friday Mosque can accommodate 5,000 worshippers. The shining golden dome of this mosque is a standout. The interior walls are decorated with beautiful wood carvings and Arabic calligraphy. Adjacent to this is the mosque, Hukuru Miskiiy, built in 1656. The interior and exterior walls of this structure are built with coral stones and have intricate carvings and a wooden roof. Beside this stands the Munnaaru, a gleaming white minaret built by Sultan Ibrahim Iskandar in 1675. The Presidential palace and the Headquarters of the Police, Navy and Coast Guards are located close by. We visited the famous Sultan's Park and the National Museum in the same locality.

The Maldives attracts holidayers of all hues.

Fish at the centre of economy

A visit to the fish market gave us a glimpse into the wide varieties of fish here, the incessant bargaining of buyers and the deft fish cleaners going about their work. Fish is an important part of Malé's economy, the second major contributor to the GDP, next to tourism. A must-visit is the Tsunami Monument, a tall structure placed on a round pedestal near the sea, as a memorial for the devastating tsunami of 2004.

The Maldives waterfront and the golden minaret of the Islamic Centre in the background.

Underwater experience

Next day, we went on an exciting underwater tour in a submarine with seats facing a large glass look-out window. The sub slowly moved out to sea, descended to a depth of about 40-50 metres. As we went close to the coral reef, we were treated to an enchanting vision of brilliantly coloured corals at close quarters, and an array of exotic fish frolicking away amidst them. Different varieties of fish came close to the windows, attracted by the food that the sub dispensed. The guide helped us to identify surgeonfish, blue-striped snapper, butterfly fish, clown anemone fish, etc., and different varieties of corals. These spectacular visions of the seascape are some of the most compelling reasons to visit the Maldives.

GARLAND OF ISLANDS

After two days, we headed off to an island resort located on Meemu Atoll in a seaplane. The trip by was memorable, with the small seaplane taking off and landing in the sea near our island resort. Flying at low altitude, we enjoyed spectacular aerial views of Maldives with small atolls scattered here and there.

While you are here, make sure to go on a boat trip in the afternoon for dolphin watching. Other activities include snorkelling and diving. Armed with the required kit and gear, we were taken in a boat to a locale near another island, where plenty of coral reefs were found. With trepidation, we dived into the sea and tried to remain afloat and view the corals underwater. As we watched the sea bed with the coral reefs, we realised that it was indeed a breathtaking experience and well worth the trouble.

The Maldives is among the most sought-after destinations for everyone, from celebrities to honeymooners, and adventure-seekers alike. Suffice to say that the turquoise lagoons, the blue sea, the white sands and the sun are bound to work their magic. We returned de-stressed and rejuvenated from our sojourn, hoping to go back again.

The May-November season is when the Baa Atoll comes alive with hundreds of manta rays. Avantika Chaturvedi joins them under water in a memorable experience

A diver feeding manta rays in the ocean.

Gliding with manta rays

It's not often that you need to consult the moon before planning a dive trip. But in the Maldives, lunar calendars are studied as earnestly as tide charts — because when the moon is full, so is the ocean.

Every year from May to November, the Baa Atoll in the Maldives becomes a scene of aquatic theatre unlike anywhere else on earth. In the UNESCO-listed Biosphere Reserve of Hanifaru Bay, the ocean ripples with movement of manta rays. Beneath the waterline, dozens, sometimes hundreds, of manta rays perform underwater pirouettes known as barrel rolls, feeding on clouds of plankton stirred up by monsoon currents.

What makes Hanifaru Bay remarkable isn't some stroke of luck, but a perfect mix of geography and physics. Monsoonal currents sweep nutrient-rich plankton into the bay's shallow, keyhole-shaped reef, where it becomes trapped in swirling eddies. The mantas follow the feast, timing their arrival with lunar-driven tides that funnel even more plankton into the feeding grounds, creating one of the wildest and most extraordinary gatherings in the natural world.

Snorkelling experience

One afternoon, I joined a snorkelling excursion after researchers reported manta sightings nearby. Minutes after slipping into the water, a manta glides past, effortlessly elegant despite its five-metre wingspan. Another follows, looping and diving through the shimmering blue. They move like kites caught in an invisible wind, mouths agape to filter microscopic plankton. Around me, snorkellers hover silently, arms tucked in reverence. There's a humbling intimacy to being in their presence — a shared understanding that we are the fleeting visitors in their world.

The Hanifaru Bay is just the place to be if you fancy swimming with the manta rays. PHOTO: NAUSHAD MOHAMED/UNSPLASH

By the time I climbed back aboard, I was covered in plankton bites that would itch for days. Yet I couldn't stop smiling. The discomfort would fade, but the memory of being surrounded by manta rays would stay with me.

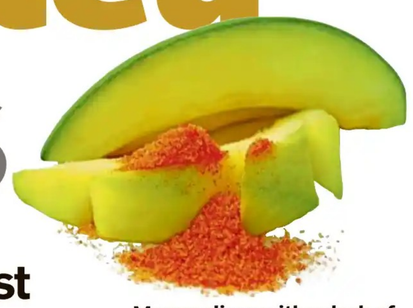
Tracking manta rays

For marine biologists, Hanifaru Bay is a living laboratory. Since 2005, researchers from the Maldives Manta Conservation Programme (MMCP) — now evolved into the Manta Trust — have been studying manta rays and their patterns obsessively, logging every sighting, tagging individuals, and tracking their movements through the atolls to build the world's largest database of reef manta rays. More than 5,000 individuals have been identified through the unique spot patterns on their bellies, helping scientists better understand migration routes, feeding behaviour and population trends. Their findings have also helped shape policies — including the designation of Hanifaru Bay as a Marine Protected Area and tighter regulations on visitor numbers. The threats facing these gentle giants are never far away. On one snorkelling trip, I spotted a manta bearing scratch-like wounds and a whale shark with a damaged dorsal fin — injuries that marine biologists told me were likely caused by boat strikes. Visitors wanting to experience Hanifaru Bay have options to suit most budgets.

On the luxury end, there's a resort bang in the middle of Baa Atoll and offers overwater bungalows, access to excursions guided by marine biologists, conservation programmes, and a spa to recover from the adventure. Their 'Manta-on-Call' programme involves old-school Nokia phone alerts snorkellers whenever mantas are sighted nearby. Travellers seeking a more affordable experience can base themselves on Dharavandhoo, the inhabited local island closest to Hanifaru Bay. Locally run guesthouses are also available, while snorkelling operators run trips into the biosphere reserve during manta season.

Mango-scented memories

Whether it is desserts made of the sweetest mangoes or spicy pickles made from the appemidi variety in Karnataka, the mango is synonymous with versatility, writes Ranjini Rao



Mango slices with a dash of red chilli powder and salt is a popular combination.

It is mango season, and there seems to be a surfeit of mangoes everywhere, possibly owing to air freight and logistics challenges in exporting. In my community alone, we've had messages from at least ten farms offering different varieties of the king of fruits. I'm trying to sample as many as I can, along with my daughter, who is home for the summer. The high notes of Imam Pasand complementing the linear inflection of Badami, for instance, offer a sweet spot where you can employ them in distinct recipes from sun-up to sun-down, and still be left with more ways to consume them. This morning, we made a curious smoothie, drawing inspiration from the ragi porridge I grew up drinking, and mixed in chunks of Imam Pasand sourced from a farm in Chitradurga, the best we've had this season.

THE GREEN THEORY

Mango chunks, ragi hurihittu slurry, a drizzle of coconut milk, a few soaked almonds, and elakki banana slices, pureed and watered down just so. I could swear this is what the food of the spheres tastes like.

The delight of raspuri

A special memory comes to mind this time of the year — long summer days spent in my ajji's house in South End Circle, squeezing raspuri lots into a big steel bowl, waiting for her to shower in powdered cardamom, and mixing it all up vigorously with a long-handled ladle. Scooping hot-bellied pooris with this messy, lumpy, fibrous and juicy seekarane, seated on a reed mat in the backyard, as the birds chirped within earshot and squirrels scurried along the garden, made us feel like we'd won the jackpot in life. Today, urban life allows for such perks as sticking a fork in de-skinned, cubed mangoes, and many young ones barely even look at their bowls of fruit, eating perfunctorily to the rhyme and rhythm of a TV show.

Traditional dessert made of mango pulp.

Whether it is eating totapuri mango slices peppered with salt and chilli powder on the roadside, or making mango leather to enhance the shelf life of the fruit, mango traditions are not restricted to nostalgic reminiscences alone, they actually support ecological resilience by helping preserve culinary knowledge, and local food systems. Across cultures, traditional mango practices call for heirloom varieties, seasonal eating, and inter-generational skills that defy the homogenisation of food. Research shows that India alone has over a thousand mango varieties, many adapted to specific microclimates and culinary uses. Still, it is the export-friendly varieties that are favoured commercially. Protecting traditional recipes and rituals offers incentives to keep lesser-known mangoes alive.

Pickling emerged as a practice that allowed households to store raw mangoes for year-round use.

Pickling for later use

A good example is the tradition of pickling, a knowledge system that considers multiple factors like mango maturity, spice ratios, salt and oil preservation techniques, and seasonality. The practice emerged as a method that allowed households to store raw mangoes for year-round use. The appemidi mango pickle here in Karnataka, uses small, wild mangoes from the Western Ghats are used almost exclusively in pickling. Local communities distinguish these among other hyper-local varieties based on flavour, fibre, aroma, and suitability for brining, passing on the recipe orally across generations. Conservationists argue that preserving these culinary traditions is essential to protecting the genetic diversity of appemidi trees, many of which grow naturally and are increasingly threatened by mono-culture farming.

(Ranjini is a communications professor, author, and podcaster, straddling many other worlds, in Bengaluru. She's passionate about urban farming and sustainable living, and can mostly be found cooking and baking in her little kitchen, where, surrounded by heirloom coffee kettles and mismatched tea cups, she finds her chi.)

Make the most of the season

Here are some ideas to engage young ones more actively and mindfully in your family or community, this mango season:

- Set up a DIY pickling station. Go to the market, buy raw mangoes, cut them and dry them in the sun until the moisture evaporates. Keep a bunch of masalas, salt, and oil ready on a table and let them spoon these ingredients into a clean, dry bottle. Talk to them about how pickles "ripen" in the sun, and let them experiment with this.
- Encourage kids to eat a mango whole – no peeling, cutting, chilling. Just use teeth and hands to take a fine mango apart and relish its goodness.
- Involve the kids in making mango-based dishes. Simple desserts that are rooted in tradition, without being burdened with the onus of pretti-fication for instagram or other socials. Cut up a few mangoes, soak them in fresh-squeezed coconut milk, add a drizzle of honey, a speck of powdered cardamom. Let this sit in an earthern pot for a few hours and enjoy it after a meal.
- Go to a mango farm and let the kids pick their mangoes, with some background about varieties and ripening timelines; they will enjoy the fruit more because they get the story of its origin.
- Host a recipe exchange or a potluck where people bring traditional mango dishes and share stories about them. Have the kids pitch in to make a cooling drink like aam panna or aam lassi!

A dessert that's hand churned and sold not in cones or cups but on a leaf; that's patte wali ice cream for you, writes Rameshinder Singh Sandhu

Ice cream on a leaf

It is minutes before noon. For 54-year-old Rajveer Kumar and his six associates, it's rush hour at their modest home near Beri Gate in Amritsar. They are all set to step out and sell the ice cream they have just made. Like any other day, they start in the early hours of the morning, constantly and slowly stirring milk with sugar and cardamom over wood fire. Once the preparation solidifies into khoya, it is removed from the fire for cooling. This step is followed by transferring the khoya into wooden barrels with a thick layer of crushed ice mixed with salt. The process keeps it frozen for hours.

Kumar and his colleagues are one of the few groups that have kept the humble leaf ice cream alive in Amritsar. The ice cream has been popular in the city from the pre-Partition era. Locally known as patte wali cream, it's served on a washed leaf. The leaves tied on the top of the barrels are an instant sign for customers, apart from the loud announcements from vendors, some of whom also call it malai baraf, because of the softness it delivers. It's rich and creamy, and not too sweet.

"We call it gold because we pour in all our sincerity into making it, from choosing buffalo milk to avoiding artificial flavours or colours," explains 40-year-old Chandan, who has been making this dessert for 20 years.

Recalls Pratibha Panghal, a retired school teacher and author, "I have fond memories of eating this delicious ice cream at Patti town near Amritsar where I grew up in the early 1970s. Like other children around, I knew the exact time of its arrival." She adds, "It was never called ice cream then but malai baraf which soothed so many, and continues to do so."

This ice cream tradition was common in the small towns and villages at one point but now it can only be spotted in Amritsar and some larger towns in north India. "Competition from global brands has impacted its popularity. But because it is such an invariable part of our culture, we should make sure to keep this dish alive," observes S S Sohal, a local historian.

So, the next time you are in Amritsar, do give it a try! You can spot such vendors on the streets of the older parts of the city, including the ones around the Golden Temple.

Ice cream served on a leaf in Amritsar. (PHOTO BY AUTHOR)

Missing piece in the fertility jigsaw

A common and misplaced perception is that fertility issues pertain to women. Experts note that modern male infertility is multifactorial — it is metabolic, environmental, hormonal, and behavioural. Tanisha Saxena decodes the fertility puzzle, ahead of International Men's Health Week, starting June 15

For decades, male infertility remained largely invisible in public discourse, overshadowed by the persistent assumption that reproductive challenges primarily stem from women.

That is now beginning to change. Across clinics in India, a growing number of men in their twenties and thirties are now undergoing fertility testing. A March 2026 study analysing Global Burden of Disease (GBD) 2021 data, published on ResearchGate and indexed in peer-reviewed literature, reported that the prevalence of male infertility in India rose by 58.82 per cent between 1990 and 2021 — the steepest increase among South Asian countries. Men aged 25 to 29 bore the highest burden, a cohort traditionally considered to be in peak reproductive health.

These findings are reinforced by a companion analysis published in 2025 and archived by the National Center for Biotechnology Information, which estimated a 55.87 per cent increase in disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) associated with male infertility in India over the same period — underscoring not just rising prevalence, but a growing health impact as well.

"The World Health Organisation and the American Society for Reproductive Medicine report that male infertility causes 40 to 50 per cent of all infertility cases worldwide, either as the sole factor or in combination," says Dr Mahesh Koregol, National Strategy Group Director and Senior Clinical Director at a Bengaluru-based fertility clinic. "In clinical IVF practice, we routinely see abnormal semen parameters — low sperm count, poor motility (movement of the sperm), and abnormal morphology (abnormal shape). Male fertility is a central determinant of reproductive success."

"The common practice of evaluating female partners first causes delays in discovering male reproductive problems," Dr Mahesh adds, suggesting that a better approach is to assess both partners from the beginning. Couples frequently undergo months — or years — of investigations and treatments focused on women before a basic semen analysis is performed. By then, potentially reversible factors may have worsened, narrowing treatment options. There are early signs of change. "More men are now willing to get tested earlier," Dr Mahesh shares. He explains that this improves success rates and reduces unnecessary interventions for women.

INTERNATIONAL MEN'S HEALTH WEEK

Reasons for drop in male fertility

"Studies show a significant decline in sperm counts over decades, and this trend appears to be continuing, particularly in urban populations," Dr Mahesh says. The pattern is mirrored in endocrine clinics. "We are seeing more cases of functional hypogonadism," explains Dr Narendra B S, lead consultant in endocrinology and diabetology at a Bengaluru hospital. "These are men with borderline-low testosterone rather than outright deficiency. Studies suggest testosterone levels have been declining by 0.5 to 1 per cent annually in parts of the world," he adds.

This decline is not confined to hormones. Rising obesity, insulin resistance, chronic stress, poor sleep, sedentary work, and exposure to endocrine-disrupting chemicals are all reasons. "Air pollution, particularly in densely populated cities, appears to affect sperm quality," Dr Mahesh adds. Even daily habits play a role. "Excessive heat exposure from prolonged laptop use and tight clothing can impact sperm health," he says.

According to Dr Narendra, modern male infertility is not driven by one cause — "it is metabolic, environmental, hormonal, and behavioural all interacting," he adds. "Mild abnormalities can often be improved with lifestyle changes — weight management, better sleep, quitting smoking, and correcting nutritional deficiencies," Dr Mahesh says. Surgical correction, such as for varicocele, may help some patients.

For more severe cases, assisted reproductive technologies remain central. For advanced cases, IVF combined with intracytoplasmic sperm injection — ICSI — is the standard, according to Dr Mahesh. But these technologies have limits. "While ICSI can overcome low count and motility, it does not correct sperm DNA damage or genetic abnormalities," Dr Mahesh cautions. "High DNA fragmentation can impair embryo development and increase miscarriage rates, even if fertilisation occurs," he adds.

"Poor sperm quality can lead to fewer high-quality embryos, slower development, and lower pregnancy success," Dr Mahesh says. Age is another factor. "Male fertility declines more gradually than in women, but it is not static," Dr Narendra explains.

The use of external hormones is emerging as a growing concern. There is a rise in infertility linked to testosterone therapy and anabolic steroids, Dr Narendra points out, adding that such therapies suppress the body's hormone system that controls testosterone production and sperm formation. Most men regain sperm production within six to twelve months of stopping therapy, but prolonged misuse can result in incomplete recovery, he says. Will supplements help? According to Dr Narendra, most products lack strong clinical evidence. Antioxidants like CoQ10, zinc, and vitamin D may help in select cases, but they are secondary to treating underlying metabolic and hormonal conditions, he adds.

WHY INFERTILITY FEELS DIFFERENT FOR MEN

"The brain's threat-response system makes men avoid what they fear most," says Dr Priyanka Banokar Pande, consultant psychiatrist and onco-psychiatrist at a Navi Mumbai hospital.

Why men delay fertility testing – despite accounting for nearly half of infertility cases – has less to do with indifference and more to do with neurobiology. A 2025 study in Discover Psychology reported significant psychological and sexual distress among men following an infertility diagnosis. "The link between stress and sperm quality is now measurable," Dr Priyanka adds, citing studies linking depression, anxiety, and stress to reduced sperm motility and sperm damage.

Chronic stress elevates cortisol, suppresses testosterone production, and disrupts sperm production. "Because these are functional disruptions, improvements in stress, sleep, and mental health can restore sperm parameters over time," she adds.

Also, substance abuse and use of anabolic steroids can damage sperm or disrupt hormonal pathways. These effects are reversible if addressed early.

NUTRITION MATTERS

FODMAP diet: All you need to know

DR SANDHYA SINGH S

Digestive issues such as gas, bloating, and abdominal discomfort with irregular bowel habits are common concerns, irrespective of age. These symptoms make the gut sensitive and lead to the diagnosis of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), which affects quality of life. Foods that are fermentable and contain oligosaccharides, disaccharides, monosaccharides, and polyols go by the acronym FODMAP. These are short chain carbohydrates that are not digested and absorbed in the small intestine, causing gut sensitivity and leading to IBS. Foods that are low FODMAP contribute to managing bowel issues effectively.

Apples are high-FODMAP.

- **High-FODMAP foods:** Wheat, rye, barley, dairy and dairy products, high fructose containing foods like apples, watermelon, mangoes, fruit juices, sugar, sugar alcohols like sorbitol, xylitol and mannitol in artificial sweeteners
- **Low-FODMAP foods:** Rice, oats, bananas, carrots and green leafy vegetables

FODMAP: What it stands for

- Fermentable oligosaccharides: found in wheat, onions, garlic, legumes (whole grams); gut bacteria break these down further
- Disaccharides: available in milk/milk products
- Monosaccharides: found in fruits like apples and mango, which contain excess fructose
- Polyols: sugar alcohols such as sorbitol and mannitol in fruits and sweeteners manufactured artificially

When FODMAPs are not absorbed in the small intestine, they pass into the large intestine and get fermented by the gut bacteria, producing gases that lead to bloating and abdominal distension. It also leads to bowel disturbances like diarrhoea and constipation. The low-FODMAP diet is a phase-wise approach to identify triggering factors in foods, including elimination, reintroduction and personalisation. The elimination phase lasts two to six weeks. During this phase, high-FODMAP foods are restricted, which controls symptoms and reduces episodes of discomfort.

The reintroduction phase involves bringing back all these foods one at a time to understand which food triggers symptoms and at what point. The personalisation phase is when problematic foods are limited and the other foods are gradually included and increased over time, after identifying individual triggers.

Tips to manage FODMAP diet

- Start elimination gradually.
- Balance macronutrients, carbohydrates, protein and fats.
- Maintain adequate hydration.
- Maintain a diet journal and record the symptoms, and the list of foods that trigger symptoms.

Keep in mind that restricting and eliminating FODMAP containing foods without prescription might lead to nutritional deficiencies due to the inadequate intake of protein, calcium, vitamins, minerals and fibre.

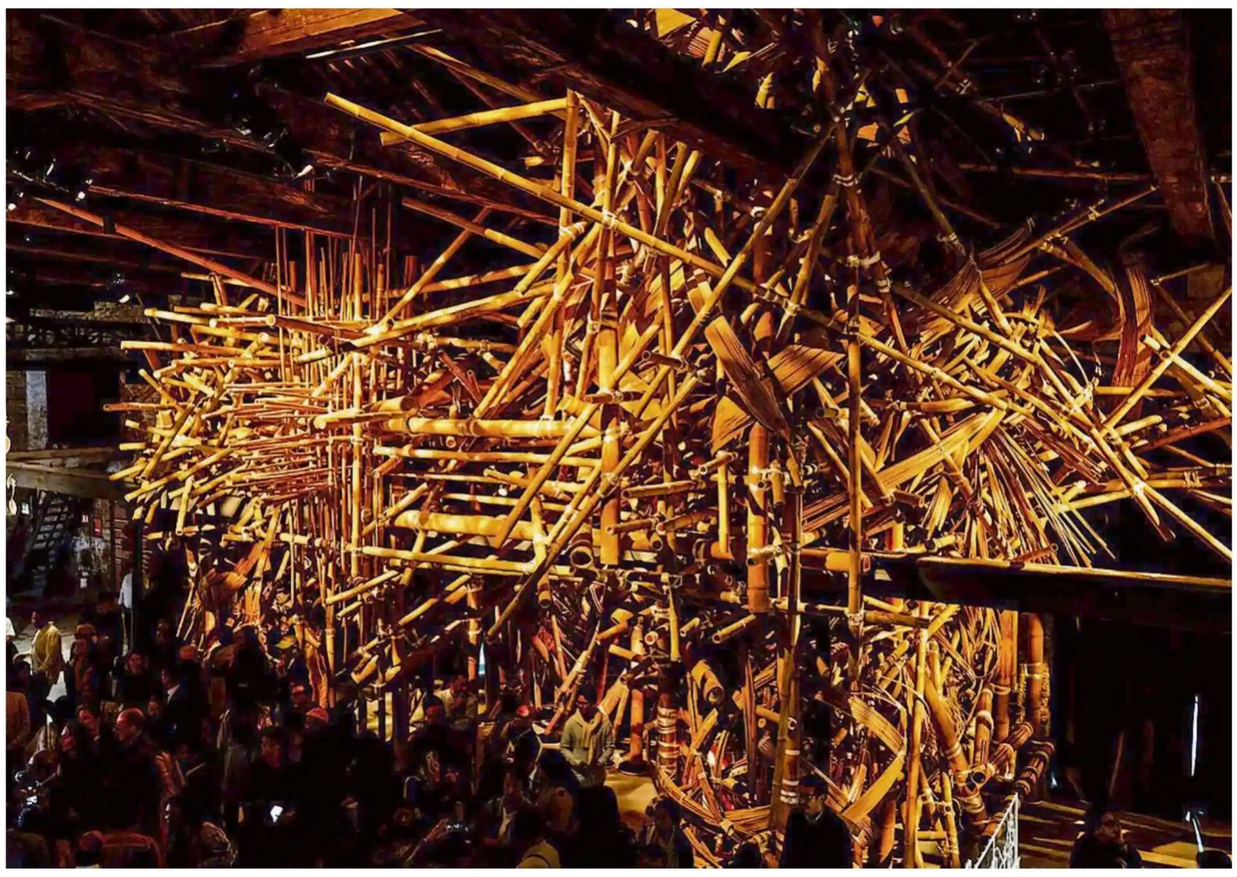
Every individual's tolerance level is different. It is important to seek the guidance of healthcare professionals.

(The author is HOD and chief clinical dietitian at a Bengaluru hospital.)

ON THE PALETTE

Mapping memories in Venice

Seven years after its last appearance, the India Pavilion at the Venice Biennale turns personal histories and climate anxieties into works that speak across cultures, writes Sreyashi Ghosh



Asim Waqif's 'Chaal' installation.

Sumakshi Singh's installation at the India Pavilion.

After a seven-year hiatus, India has returned to the Venice Biennale with a pavilion that reflects on memory, ecology and belonging through the work of five leading contemporary artists. Presented by the Ministry of Culture in collaboration with the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre (NMACC) and Serendipity Arts, the India Pavilion at the 61st Venice Biennale is curated by Dr Amin Jaffer under the theme Geographies of Distance: Remembering Home. The exhibition brings together the practices of Alwar Balasubramaniam, Ranjani Shettar, Sumakshi Singh, Skarma Sonam Tashi and Asim Waqif. Collectively, their works explore sustainability, ecological fragility and cultural memory through deeply rooted Indian traditions, practices and heritage.

Paresh Maity's 'Equilibrium'. (PIC COURTESY: PARESH MAITY)

"As curator, my role has been to shape a project that represents the breadth and dynamism of contemporary art practice in India at this moment. My approach has been to craft a narrative that reflects India's diversity, while ensuring that each artist's voice contributes harmoniously to the Pavilion's curatorial theme," says Dr Amin Jaffer.

The India Pavilion is curated under the aegis of the national framework, representing a collective vision of Indian contemporary art. The Venice Biennale thrives on these multiple layers: national pavilions, collateral events and independent museum-led exhibitions.

Among the most intimate works is Sumakshi Singh's spectral recreation of her demolished family home in New Delhi. Delicate embroidery threads trace doorways, windows and walls, transforming personal memory into a broader meditation on displacement and belonging.

Rasika Kajaria, founder of Gallery 320, comments on Singh's participation: "Having worked for many years with her, it is wonderful to see her work presented at the Venice Biennale. Over the years, I have seen artists such as Sumakshi grow from studio practices into major international exhibitions and institutional platforms, and supporting that journey continues to be one of the most important and rewarding parts of my work."

Ranjani Shettar presents large-scale installations made from beeswax, wood and cloth that echo threatened rural environments. Her constellations of organic forms are poetic yet urgent, drawing attention to the quiet erosion of ecological systems amid rapid urbanisation.

"I am honoured to be representing India; it is a very special exhibition and stage. In no other art exhibition does an artist get to officially represent a country, backed by the government. I also felt a huge responsibility and gave it my all to make it work. It was physically and mentally exhausting to bring a huge project to fruition in such a short space of time. It has brought me a lot of joy making it, and I hope it evokes the same feeling in the audience," says Shettar.

Nalini Malani's 'Of Woman Born'. (PIC COURTESY: KIRAN NADAR MUSEUM OF ART)

Asim Waqif's Chaal takes the form of a bamboo structure assembled from organic and recycled materials. Trained as an architect, Skarma Sonam Tashi brings sustainable practices from Ladakh into the exhibition, while Balasubramaniam's installations explore the ecological dialogue between terrain and soil, reflecting sustainability-oriented approaches through material and form.

"Indian artists today are no longer on the periphery of the global cultural conversation; they are shaping it with confidence, originality and a deeply rooted contemporary voice," says Tarana Sawhney, Chairperson of the CII National Committee on Art and Culture.

Beyond the India Pavilion, several artists of Indian origin are presenting significant projects across Venice. Photographer Dayanita Singh is exhibiting Archivio at the State Archives of Venice. Meanwhile, Nalini Malani's Of Woman Born, presented by the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art at the Magazzini del Sale, comprises multiple animations derived from more than 30,000 iPad drawings.

"Nalini Malani is one of the most vital voices in contemporary art today, whose practice has, for decades, articulated a fearless ethical position on violence, displacement and the silencing of women. Nalini Malani – Of Woman Born is an urgent and uncompromising extension of that vision," says Kiran Nadar, Chairperson of KNMA.

This dual presence strengthens India's footprint at Venice, presenting both state-supported and privately curated perspectives.

Another Indian artist making a prominent appearance is Paresh Maity, whose exhibition Equilibrium is installed at the Marinaressa Gardens. A regular presence at the Biennale for more than three decades, Maity says, "Venice Biennale is the oldest, biggest, longest art exhibition in the world, the Olympics of art which happens every two years, and it is important. The European Cultural Council chose my work. I use bronze because it is easy to work with and transport."

Equilibrium envisions the cosmos as a finely balanced system rooted in cardinal directions and Indian spatial philosophy. Rising as a monumental brass form, its planes and axes suggest an unseen harmony, while the crowned head symbolises consciousness guiding nature's force. By framing space rather than enclosing it, the sculpture unites solidity and emptiness, presence and absence, becoming a metaphor for cosmic balance and the human pursuit of inner alignment.

The India Pavilion itself adopts a multi-artist approach to create what its organisers describe as a clear voice on the complexities of contemporary India. Located at the Isolotto warehouse in Venice's Arsenale district, the exhibition draws from memory, migration, craft traditions and explorations of identity. Each artist's practice is deeply rooted in lived experience, ensuring that the pavilion becomes more than a showcase of artworks. Instead, it emerges as a tapestry of personal journeys that resonate far beyond national borders.

The Venice Biennale runs till November 2026.

PAWS & LIFE

When life comes full circle...

Beyond grey hair, wrinkles and empty nests, dogs remain to soothe, comfort, and care for us when we need them most, writes Nalini Sorensen

I'm between chapters in my life story — that in-between place where one chapter has ended and the next is yet to begin; that small pause where *anything* can happen. You see, my younger son graduated from high school just a few days ago, and in a few short months, he will leave home and set off for his undergraduate studies overseas.

I have two sons, and of course, my dog-ter, Sydney. My older son is already studying overseas, so before long, our Sydney will essentially become an only child at home. Two years ago, about a month after my older son left home, my younger son let out a dramatic sigh and said, "It's a tough gig being an only child in this home." What can I say? All eyes were on him, and he felt the heat.

It makes me pause and wonder how things will pan out for Sydney once she becomes the only child in the Sorensen home. Will we go on meandering, endless walks? There is no clock to look at, no children needing breakfast and packed lunches before being sent off to school. What could come in the way of a long, leisurely walk each morning to kickstart our day?

Will we finally get into a routine of a bath each Sunday? Sunday was always the dog-bath day in my home when I was a little girl. My dad was the bath giver, and there was great excitement leading up to Sunday afternoon when he would bathe our dogs each week. I've not been half as regular with poor Syds. I do a smell check, and then she gets a bath ... it mostly ends up being once every fortnight, and on the odd occasion, with several excellent reasons why, even once every three weeks.

Will I whip up gourmet meals for her? Move over, kibble. Now that I have more time, can I start to experiment with extravagant home-cooked meals for Syds? She does get boiled chicken with either carrot or pumpkin, but I've been reading up about the benefits of adding haldi to her diet, especially as she ages. Could this be the moment of reckoning when I finally turn into the domestic diva of our kitchen, and once and for all clear the long tab of undercooked and/or often burnt dinners that I've managed to pass off as edible food, over the years, both for the humans and the dog in this home? The possibilities are endless.

Will I train her to do tricks? We have a family Instagram group, bizarrely called 'Borzoi Non-enthusiasts' (my older son is obsessed with Borzois, a rather ginormous dog breed, while the rest of the family isn't), where we share dog videos. I clearly remember one lady teaching her dog to whisper-bark, an incredible, much-needed skill to have in our home, as Syds always has a lot to say! Can I finally use the extra time to teach her to do something apart from sit, shake hands, fetch, and catch? Actually, maybe I should start at a lower level and teach her to shake hands with her right paw instead of her left.

Will I spoil her more? As I type this, I wonder if this is even possible. Can I take this up a notch? Isn't it already sky-high? She's already calling the shots here — sleeping on our beds, jumping on the sofa, bossily reminding us when it's time for her meals and walks. How much worse can this possibly get?

While I write about all this lightly, the truth is, I do feel life coming full circle. It's gone beyond the grey hair and the wrinkles. There is something indefinably final about children graduating and launching themselves off into the world, a world that I find increasingly hard to trust or have faith in. Nothing can replace my sons being home, I know that. But I also know that life quietly rearranges itself around what remains, as one chapter ends, and another begins.

I think this is why the universe gave us dogs ... not just dogs, but animals, birds, plants, and nature. These are the things that soothe, comfort, and care for us when we find ourselves needing them most.

The writer is an award-winning children's author who loves dogs, children, and books — the order changes daily. Write to her at nalinisorensen@gmail.com

Paws & Life *is a monthly column that reflects on how our pets shape the way we live, love, and learn.*

Life quietly rearranges itself around what remains.

POT-POURRI

A garden that was inspired by a classic book

Neha Kirpal visits a green space in Thrissur, inspired by a 17th-century magnum opus by Dutch governor Hendrik Van Rheede, which documented the region's rich biodiversity

A view of the garden.

On a recent trip to Kerala, I had the opportunity to visit the spectacular Hortus Malabaricus Botanical Garden. Located in Nedumpura, a village in Thrissur district, the 27-acre garden boasts a mind-boggling collection of nearly 1,500 varieties of plants from across the world. More than 100 varieties of birds and butterflies have also been recorded here.

"Hortus Malabaricus," a Latin phrase, translates to "garden of Malabar", and that is exactly what this space embodies. The garden is inspired by a 12-volume magnum opus compiled by Dutch governor Hendrik van Rheede in the 17th century, which documents the region's rich biodiversity. The book records 742 plant species found in and around Kerala, compiled with the assistance of a local herbalist, Itty Achuthan.

"Professor K S Manilal, former head of the botany department at Calicut University, later came across these volumes and undertook the monumental task of translating, annotating, and researching the plants," said Anand Gopinath, botanist and content manager at the garden. "The Latin treatise was first published in English and then translated into Malayalam."

The vision behind the garden belongs to Sam Santhosh, an entrepreneur with a background in mechanical engineering. After spending nearly 35 years in the software industry, he returned to his hometown to bring this passion project to life. Work on the garden began in 2015, transforming old rubber and coconut plantations and gradually introducing a vast collection of plants — including 720 species originally mentioned in Hortus Malabaricus. The process took over a decade, and the garden finally opened to the public last year.

Before beginning my walk, I paused to study the garden's detailed map. The space is divided into 14 distinct sections, the oldest being the Malabar Garden. The Star of David section features 13 species of grasses arranged in the geometric pattern of the Jewish six-pointed star. The vegetable garden highlights the nutritional and medicinal value of various edible plants, while Kadalivanam showcases banana varieties and selected plant species from the Andaman Islands.

Cycads & Palms presents ancient cycads alongside diverse palm species, and the Black Pepper Garden displays 25 different varieties of pepper. Adding an unexpected international touch is a large-scale replica of the famed Sleeping Lady statue from the island of Malta. The aquatic section contains over 200 water-dwelling plant species, including 93 native to Kerala and referenced in the book. The seasonal plants section features 212 species that bloom at different times of the year.

Other areas include sections dedicated to xerophytic plants, a 20-terraced butterfly garden, a bamboo grove, and a natural forest extension complete with rainwater-harvesting ponds.

A walk through the pristine landscape is almost meditative, imbued with a subtle sense of spirituality. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Sacred Grove section, inspired by yet another book, Nanditha Krishna's Sacred Plants of India. This area is divided into five parts: the Indus Valley section displays seals depicting plants from the Harappan civilisation; the Vedic Period section features geometric structures used for fire rituals; Hinduism is represented through a three-tiered temple architecture; Buddhism includes a sculpture with seven cascading waterfalls; and Jainism showcases plants symbolising the 24 Tirthankaras.

The 'Sacred Grove' section.

One of my personal favourites was the buttercup tree, its massive yellow flowers impossible to miss. Maintaining a garden of this scale is no small feat.

A team of 20 dedicated garden workers, supported by 10 staff members, ensures its upkeep. "Our objective is to conserve, propagate, and research the medicinal plants that grow naturally in Kerala," explained Gopinath.

Hortus Malabaricus proved to be a truly refreshing experience — a rare space where history, literature, and living biodiversity come together.

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